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STARR'S HOUSE,

THE PRECINCTS,

CANTERBURY.

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PORTRAITS
AND
APPRECIATIONS

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PORTRAITS
AND
APPRECIATIONS

By
VISCOUNT D'ABERNON

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LIMITED LONDON

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TO HELEN

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PREFACE

FRIENDS who take the debatable, and possibly erroneous, view that individuals are a more interesting subject of study than events, have urged me to republish in separate form the character sketches included in my Berlin Diary. I hesitate to comply with the suggestion, but am influenced by the criticism that the diary contained many tables of figures, and that these repel more readers than they attract. Moreover, while to me statistics appear the heart of discussion, they are

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anathema not only to those who seek relaxation rather than enlightenment but to all who affect a taste in literature.

To the original number, portraits not hitherto published have been added, notably those of Lord Cromer, Sultan Abdul Hamid, Marshal Pilsudski and Lord Birkenhead, while the Appreciations of the French and German national characters have been revised.

I have not confined myself to the political arena, having included brief sketches of the artists, Sargent and McEvoy—and of that remarkable group, the Souls.

If, after perusal of these pages, a just impression is formed of some of the most remarkable of my contemporaries, I shall be satisfied. May I also hope that the appreciations of the French and German characters will contribute in some degree to a friendly comprehension of our two most powerful neighbours on the Continent?

The past epoch has been one of stupendous events—the most terrible War recorded in History—astounding discoveries in Science—a

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vast increase of the power of Man over Nature —distance annihilated—air and under-sea conquered and rendered available for good or for evil—knowledge increased in such a manner that, on the one hand, normal existence has been extended and youth prolonged, while, on the other the possibilities of mass destruction of human life are such as must terrify the far-seeing.

I have endeavoured to show the intellectual complexion and mental characteristics of some prominent individuals of the period, how they lived and the impression they made upon a dispassionate observer.

Impartiality has been aimed at: those who have taken part in the events of these great years will judge if, in any measure, it has been attained.

D'ABERNON.

ROME.
1931.

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THE EARL OF CROMER

EVELYN BARING, Earl of Cromer, was the most sensible of men. No matter what the subject or the occasion, he could be relied upon for a sound opinion; for something neither fanciful nor trite. An enemy to all sentimentality, a hater of flummery of word or of thought, a dispassionate critic both of actions and intentions—he brought clear judgment, based on wide knowledge of men and books, to the study of all problems.

As to his character: were it not for the

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divergent requirements of their respective careers, one might be tempted to apply to Cromer the description of Ninon de l'Enclos by Saint-Simon: "Désintéressée, fidèle, secrète, sûre au dernier point."

Nothing is more like itself, nothing less like anything else, than a Baring. The family is one of the few that produce a similar type with regularity—a regularity only accentuated by the rare occurrence of a freak. Strong, sensible, self-reliant men, with a profound belief in themselves, in their family, and in their country—eminently fair and just; no trace of hypocrisy or cant; not only solid and square, but giving the impression both of solidity and squareness. All of them able; some, like Cromer, pre-eminently so; not subtle or mentally agile, but endowed with that curious combination of character which lends authority even to doubtful decisions, and makes those who possess it respected in counsel and obeyed as rulers. The ability to produce such men has made us a ruling race. As long as there are

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THE EARL OF CROMER.

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Barings, England will know where to turn in an emergency.

Apart from characteristics common to the family, Cromer had exceptional personal aptitudes—amongst these an understanding and appreciation of Greek and Roman literature. Every morning before starting on official work, he read Homer or some other classic in the original. While not a fine scholar, he was permeated with the heroic spirit of antiquity ; its frankly avowed thirst for fame ; its neglect of the insignificant ; its belief in strength and power ; its admiration for achievement ; its contempt for weakness, whether in individuals or in nations.

Essentially Roman in his conception of things, Cromer's attitude in a crisis was certainly inspired by what he believed appropriate to a Pro-Consul. To this classical basis were added other sources of strength. He was steeped in the severe financial tradition of Peel and Gladstone. He placed a sound financial system before every other consideration. If expenditure was demanded

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for the Army, for Justice, or for Public Works, it was only granted—grants would only be considered—if the money could be found without disturbing the equilibrium of the Budget. The Finance Department might be niggardly and soulless; its authority was paramount, its veto must not be overridden. In a well-ordered State the Finance Minister takes precedence of the Minister for War.

Cromer's system of work was regularity itself. After an hour's reading of the classics, he was at his desk from 8 a.m. until two hours before sunset—writing, reading, and giving interviews. And at sunset work began again. The two hours' interval was devoted to physical exercise. Cromer was Roman even in recreation—the object was to strengthen the body and maintain health. In every pursuit, in every game, the ultimate goal was increased efficiency.

Very accessible to his principal subordinates, he was always ready to listen and advise. On any doubtful point he would send off a dispatch or a telegram to Downing Street. For so

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strong-willed and self-reliant a man, he referred home with surprising frequency. These communications he wrote out himself on half-margin paper, making few corrections, and sending the message as originally drafted. He would write rapidly in the presence of his subordinates and ask them for criticism or emendation. Being rightly convinced that no one could state a case more clearly than himself, he accepted emendation with definite reluctance.

In interviews with Egyptian Ministers and officials, he was civil but peremptory—no attempt at Persian graces; none of the rhetoric of compliment. He adhered to what he could do best—clear, straightforward, slightly paternal statement, with no flowers of speech. None of the prolixity which besets Anglo-Indian officials; no administrative jargon or periphrasis—still less a descent into the journalistic or the picturesque. Rather the strength and brevity of a military commander. With a less genial appearance, the plainness of his speech might have caused

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offence, but, with Cromer, a faint suggestion of Pickwick made the perceptive realise that, behind the curt phrase and abrupt manner, there lay a certain broad benevolence—a sense of what was due from the strong to the weak ; a kindly superiority based upon benign self-reliance.

Cromer's relations with the Egyptian Government were divided into two distinct phases : before the Nubar deception and after. Like other wise men, he did not disdain the pleasure to be derived from flattery, and that wiliest of Armenians, Nubar Pasha, as long as he thought Cromer strongly supported from London, exhausted the resources of Oriental art to gain his favour. Later, from some secret source, Nubar heard from London that Cromer was considered by the Foreign Office too overbearing, while I, who had charge of finance, was alienating Egyptian opinion by a rigid application of economy, a too ruthless determination to escape bankruptcy. As the sequel proved, the information was inaccurate, but it gave Nubar

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the courage to try a bold stroke, and he took advantage of a visit to London to obtain a private interview with Lord Salisbury.

In the course of this interview, he declared that his position as Egyptian Prime Minister was rendered impossible by Cromer's continual interference in administration and by our exaggerated fiscality. Lord Salisbury telegraphed the full interview to Cromer, concluding with the assurance that nothing which Nubar had said affected the views of the British Government or diminished their complete confidence in the English representatives in Egypt. Nubar then returned to Cairo, discomfited, and the Khedive—aware of the attempted intrigue and its failure—lost no time in dismissing the unsuccessful exponent of Egyptian discontent, appointing as his successor a Minister more amenable to Cromer's advice. Thus ended the first phase, the one in which Cromer believed that much could be done with Egyptian Ministers through personal influence and cordiality. In the second phase, he

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became less genial and more uncompromising, and it was at this period that he gained his great authority over the Egyptian Government and the population of Egypt. During this time he had almost the authority of a Pharaoh. The Home Government followed his advice; the Egyptian Ministers conformed to his behests.

While Cromer's manner with Easterns inclined towards impatience, no one enjoyed the unconscious humour and the picturesqueness of the Oriental more than he. He constantly underlined the profound difference of mental aspect between the two civilisations. I remember in 1885, at the time of the Pendjeh crisis, when war between Russia and England seemed probable, Cromer asked an Egyptian Minister what would be thought in Egypt if war between these two World Powers was declared. The reply was: "Nous penserons comme cela—rien du tout."

Another Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs delighted him by his ingenuous frankness of speech: one of Cromer's diplomatic

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colleagues, who happened to have no progeny, was asked at an official reception how many children he had. In the East, this is a question of conventional politeness. On his replying, "Unfortunately, none," the Egyptian pursued the matter with: "À qui la faute, à vous ou à Madame la Comtesse ?"

English officials' peculiar notions of French appealed no less to his sense of humour. I remember General Hamley, the author of the then standard work on strategy, saying at a meeting of a frontier commission—"Si les Turcs donnent cela aux Grecs, toute la chose est alterée." It was the same General who, with the wisdom of Solomon, decided the question as to whether the interpreters to a military commission should be admitted to share in the honour of the official photograph by suggesting that they should appear in the picture, but only in profile and not full face.

Cromer's success in the government of Egypt and the extraordinary material progress which resulted from his policy lend importance

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to his views on other problems that confront the British Empire. On the vital question of Reform in India, Cromer had little sympathy with the Montagu school. He did not deny the wisdom of associating Indians to a greater extent than heretofore with the executive Government of the country, but he thought the policy of effecting legislation through the machinery of representative bodies largely composed of elected members had been pushed to greater lengths than was prudent. He was frankly nervous of these bold experiments, and doubted whether the immediate popularity gained by them would not weaken the force of the executive Government and its capacity to deal with emergencies.

Apart from all details, the dominant view in his mind was that it ought to be made clear that we had not the slightest intention of abandoning our Indian possessions, and that the foundation-stone of Indian reform must be the steadfast maintenance of British supremacy. So far from thinking that there was doubt as to our right in keeping India,

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he believed it was much more doubtful whether we had the right to leave it. If we abandoned India, anarchy would return. No native power could unite Hindus and Moslems, Rajputs and Mahrattas, Sikhs and Bengalis, Parsees and Christians under one sceptre. To quote the words of a French writer: "England has accomplished this miracle; no other Power could." The idea that Parliamentary institutions, because they have succeeded in Europe, could be transported to the East with any probability of producing good government was, in Cromer's opinion, absurd. He regarded it as bald Empiricism, and certain to lead, at no distant date, to disaster.

The above notes on the career of a remarkable man have failed in their purpose if they have not given an impression of immense common sense, backed by exceptional strength and resolution.

On leaving Egypt, Cromer returned to England, and spoke frequently in the House of Lords. His speeches were invariably marked

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by sanity and judgment, but he was out of sympathy with the delays and formalities of Parliamentary procedure. He remained to the end a man of deeds rather than of words, convinced that, in the East, soft phrases are no panacea, and that on occasion a heavy hand is indispensable to authority.

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THE MARQUESS CURZON

" O fortunatam natam, me Consule, Romam."

THE Marquess Curzon was born grandiloquent; his flow of language was no acquired talent, but innate and bred in the bone. There was an air of profuse magnificence in his diction. He lisped in Gibbon, for the Gibbon came. Had he spoken simply, it would have been affectation. Fine phrases were the natural outcome of his view of life. Everything was seen in the grand manner.

Pomp and ceremony were for him the natural attributes of a dignified career—not the accompaniment, but the essence. While

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the ostentation was not vulgar, there was no understanding of the simple and the intimate ; the cool, sequestered vale of life had no call for grandiose souls like his.

Curzon's unique achievement was to combine this pomposity with humour. No one was naturally more pompous, but no one had a keener appreciation of the ludicrous side of things. This went so far that he saw the laughable aspect of everything except of his own attitude towards life. This remained unaltered to the end. He was born and he died in the faith of an aristocrat of the English eighteenth century : an aristocrat of so superb a type that it is met with rarely except in romance ; unremitting and indefatigable in the service of his country ; never sparing himself and still less sparing others ; exacting both towards subordinates and friends ; domineering but good-natured ; and, in spite of great physical suffering, serene, cheerful, and humorous.

Under many of the definitions of genius which pass current, Curzon has an almost

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Photo: Bourne and Shepherd.

THE MARQUESS CURZON OF KEDLESTON.

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superlative right to claim it. For if it is a capacity for taking pains, no one took greater pains than he. If it consists in the union in a high degree of qualities not usually found in conjunction, no one could assert a right to possess these with a title better than his. What could be in sharper contradiction than his pride and his laboriousness, than his pomposity and his sense of fun?

If, again, genius is defined as the possession of one aptitude in the highest degree, he might found his claim on the dignity and grace of his oratory.

Nature rarely allows to the eloquent and facile the genuine gift of penetration and understanding. They manage well enough without it. Judged by this standard, Curzon had an abnormal endowment, for he added a real comprehension of many subjects to a fabulous facility in expatiating upon them.

The best and most attached of friends, he regarded his circle as an extension of himself, and entitled, therefore, to infinite consideration, affection, and respect.

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In speech, his facility and felicity were astounding: always in the grand manner; the phrases admirable in form, never descending to the colloquial or the commonplace, without much wit, but with a pervading humour which never deserted him. In his occasional speeches the transition from the purple patch to the impromptu was scarcely noticeable, so admirable and so stately was the phraseology of the improvisation. One of his friends said of him that he gave orders to a footman in language which would not have disgraced Cicero addressing the Roman Senate, and he occasionally called to servants not by name but by the title of their station, saying, "Housemaid, throw wide the casement," "Footman, add fuel to the flame."

Everything he attempted was conceived on a magnificent scale: his hospitality was profuse, but concentrated on great entertainments. Not the usual slipshod intimacy of a few friends dropping in to luncheon or coming in to play a quiet rubber after dinner. Such enjoyments had no attraction for him.

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They interfered with work—they lacked style—they had neither dignity nor grandeur.

No one would lavish more loving care on large entertainments than Curzon. Every item was thought out: every arrangement for comfort and convenience was elaborately drawn up and written down, not by proxy, but by the host himself; no detail was too paltry for his meticulous care, and neither wife nor secretary was allowed to mar or to dilute the majestic virility of the entertainment.

Never before were united in the same person so dominant a love of the august and stately with such an appreciation of the slight absurdity there is in all pomp and pretension—how nearly they approach the futile. Curzon would have admitted the absurdity; he would have denied the futility. The grand manner, he thought, impressed the world.

Curzon's power of work and his love of work were alike remarkable. None of the adventitious modern aids like shorthand and the dictaphone. Most letters written in his own hand, many of them after midnight. The

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story is authentic of the Secretary of the National Gallery Commission, who asked whether Curzon could receive him to discuss a draft report which had to be drawn up. Curzon replied : " Come any day after midnight." It is less known that when the Secretary did present himself at 1 a.m., Curzon had written out a draft report with his own hand. And with certain alterations his draft was adopted by the Committee, and now forms the Main Charter of the National and Tate Galleries. After twelve years' experience, this document constitutes an epitome of all that administrative wisdom and an instructed taste could suggest.

It is also little known that in his last fatal illness, a few days before his death, he wrote an elaborate will, without any aid from lawyer or secretary, in a style reminiscent of a Cæsar.

There was something imperial about Curzon, and nothing about him was more imperial than his enjoyment of vanity. Moralists may condemn this passion ; ascetics

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may eschew it ; there can be no question as to the reality of the satisfaction it procures its votaries.

Vanity has, however, one serious defect. A grave affront may be fatal. This was the case with Curzon. He never recovered from the catastrophic disappointment of the missed Premiership of 1923. This blow was succeeded by the intense mortification of Austen Chamberlain's appointment to the Foreign Office in 1924. What was the position ? Curzon had led the House of Lords with brilliancy for several years ; he was a past-master in the kind of occasional oratory required of a Prime Minister, indeed, he already spoke like a Prime Minister when still an undergraduate. He had a long record of distinguished service to the State. He was in the highest degree representative. It was not without justification that he considered himself the probable successor to Bonar Law as Premier.

Bonar Law resigned in May 1923, and Baldwin was appointed Premier ; Chamber-

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lain became Foreign Minister in November 1924. Curzon died in March 1925. The surgeon's explanation of death was an internal hæmorrhage, the deeper cause was a double charge of mortification and disappointment. He had long considered himself a potential Prime Minister and irreplaceable at the Foreign Office. After half a century of hope and many years of unceasing toil, the highest prize seemed to be within his grasp. For causes which were to him incomprehensible it passed to another, and abasement in the ministerial hierarchy replaced the expected advance. In a world where such injustice was possible, where Fate was so malignant, there could be no joy, no contentment in living.

"The prize was lost. He for a moment tried
To live without it—liked it not—and died."

Had an epitaph to be found, it should be :

"Immense orgueil : justifié."

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D. LLOYD GEORGE

IF the results attained by the numerous Conferences on Reparation between 1920 and 1922 were disappointing, no one who was present at them would attribute blame to the leading British representative. It was indeed a constant pleasure to watch Lloyd George and listen to him. His facility of speech, his wit and readiness in reply, his rapidity of decision, were alike admirable. Not less admirable were his constant good-humour and his inexhaustible appetite for new work. No matter what the hour, he was

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ready to take on a new discussion, to receive information, to give a decision. Provided indeed that the information was given verbally, for no one rebelled more against reading official memoranda, or had less patience with exhaustive reports.

Mental alertness and his readiness in finding appropriate words to support argument protected him from the usual weakness of English negotiators—a proclivity to concur in the views of others, partly from good-nature and partly from indolence, or again in some other cases from a deliberateness of mind which defers decision.

For Lloyd George it was more natural, and perhaps more agreeable, to differ than to assent; it was more easy to decide than to defer decision. He was sometimes quick to a fault, never tardy. On occasion he was deliberately aggressive—a rare attitude for an English negotiator. Experience had taught him that no international conference reaches its goal without at least one serious crisis; he therefore precipitated the crisis

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RT. HON. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE.

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early in the proceedings in order to get through with it.

The changeableness with which Lloyd George is usually charged was never shown in the course of the Conferences on Reparation. On the contrary, the line or the policy taken from the first was adhered to steadfastly throughout. He was, indeed, extremely obstinate.

This policy was for England to adopt a reasonable, broadminded, and even generous attitude to our ex-enemy, provided that Germany displayed goodwill and showed promise of good faith. It was evident throughout that Lloyd George would go as far in this direction as the forces behind him allowed. The limiting factor was not so much what he thought right as what—as a Minister dependent on a Parliamentary majority—he thought it safe to put before the House of Commons and the public.

He was, perhaps, too conscious of the fact that to go in advance of public opinion might imperil his own influence and destroy his

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power for good. While a prudent sense of expediency and a genuine solicitude for pacification alike suggested the wisdom of waiting until the healing influence of time had brought public opinion to a saner view of the diplomatic, political, and military position, a stronger lead to the public might nevertheless have been given by the Prime Minister.

Security was the goal; without it, there was no hope of any appeasement between France and Germany.

From an early stage it was clear that security could only be negotiated on the basis of reciprocity. Lloyd George probably realised this as soon as anybody. He deemed it inexpedient to press it.

It is often said that Lloyd George was too mercurial to be a safe companion for tiger shooting. The accusation, if not totally unjust, is far too general. Moreover, it ignores the essential cause of Lloyd George's mutability in regard to persons, viz. his obstinate immutability in respect of things.

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His conduct when tiger shooting would depend entirely on the classification he gave to the tiger. If it appeared to him that the animal was of the aristocratic type, no hunter could be more keen and eager, none more ardent and bold. If, on the other hand, Celtic imagination could endow the object of pursuit with some remote affinity with the underdog, it would be prudent for his companion not to expect meticulous fidelity. An invincible devotion to what he conceived to be the oppressed would overcome any conventional or contractual obligation of comradeship.

This overpowering bias against the privileged is the explanation of much in Lloyd George's career which has caused astonishment and provoked criticism. Admirable in itself as the sentiment may be, it was pushed by him to the verge of obsession.

But despite his prejudices, and their detrimental working on his political action, he will be recognised by history as the minister whose unprecedented supremacy in the

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English political arena during 1917 and 1918 contributed powerfully to bring the Great War to a victorious conclusion.

Whatever may be thought of the wisdom of the Versailles Treaty, judged from a European standpoint, there can be no question as to the achievement of Lloyd George as an English advocate. The handing over of the German Fleet, the restrictions as to its future strength, the mandates established over former German colonies, the recognition of the right of the British Dominions to adequate representation on international councils and at Geneva—all these were essential and fundamental objects of British policy, and all were attained. This constituted an outstanding achievement of skill, tact, energy, and advocacy.

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THE EARL OF BALFOUR

IT is usual to associate Balfour's early political career with the Fourth Party, and to connect him with Randolph Churchill, Gorst, and Drummond Wolff. But this association, which is suggestive of ruthless and rather rough political activity, gives a false impression of the more delicate sides of Balfour's character and of the ruling bias of his nature. A more correct impression may be formed if he is regarded not as a member of an aggressive political cave, but as the leader of a brilliant intellectual and literary set.

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There never was any question as to the leadership of that group called the "Souls," which astonished and fascinated London in the 'nineties and before. Balfour stood far above the rest; he was the inevitable chief, though the group included Curzon, Wyndham, and Cust. In what did Balfour's superiority consist? In a supreme dialectic. It was impossible to argue any subject with him without being left with the impression that one's own view was clumsy and erroneous, that one's statement of it had been more clumsy than the view itself. He made it appear that his opponent had seen only half the problem and that what really mattered had been overlooked.

The best way to give a true idea of Balfour's intellectual quality is perhaps by analogy and contrast. Compare him with other men who have been the leaders of their generation, with men who, like him, have been Prime Ministers of England. I have known no less than eleven of these eminent statesmen, and for vision, detachment, and adroitness

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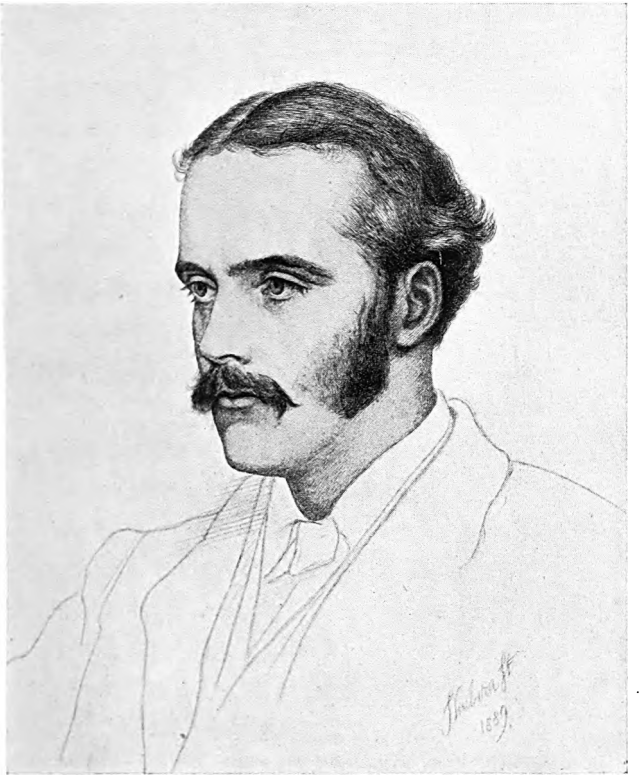

THE EARL OF BALFOUR.
From a pencil drawing by the Duchess of Rutland.

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Balfour was unequalled. Unlike Gladstone, he was hampered by no passionate convictions; unlike Rosebery, he was not hypersensitive; compared with Campbell-Bannerman, he had a much finer intellect; compared with Asquith, he was more Greek and less Roman, and perhaps less a party man, strong though his party feeling was. The usual comparison is with his uncle, Lord Salisbury.

While the two had marked qualities in common, the younger man was more of a philosopher and less of an aristocrat: he had a wider outlook, a finer dialectic, and a more impartial survey of mankind.

In default of any close similarity with a contemporary, one is forced to recur to the classical world, and no analogy is so close as that with the Athenian philosopher Demonax, who lived in the first century of the Christian era. Of him, it was said that he never had an enemy, and that by his strange personal charm he attained such popularity and reverence that in old age he could enter

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any Athenian house uninvited. The same could be said of Balfour. An anecdote of Demonax is characteristic of both men. When criticised by Epictetus for not marrying and thus founding a line of philosophers, he replied by asking the celibate philosopher to give him one of his daughters.[1]

Balfour's mind was like a rapier of finest steel, flashing through the opponent's guard with lightning rapidity and unerring aim, inflicting wounds that were controversially fatal, less because they were heavy than because the vital spot was touched. If it is thought that the above description implies instability or want of conviction, such an impression is erroneous. There was no suspicion of either.

His general theory of life appeared to be that happiness is close to us, in freedom from bondage to imagined good, and in emancipation from the things of sense. No one less than he sought happiness in regions where happiness is not to be found.

[1] Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 366.

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The completeness of his original survey was such that no argument produced by an opponent could impress by its novelty. As regards an alleged want of conviction, the reality of belief was much stronger than the superficial appearance. There were profound convictions on a limited number of subjects, and these were proof against the assaults of time or argument. Admittedly, fundamental convictions were few in number, but even outside these Balfour was tenacious rather than changeable. With such rapidity of mind, this was unexpected. While he might admit the force of arguments against his own view, he did not change his opinion, partly because he was never at a loss for counter-arguments to strengthen his original position. In discussion, one was indeed constantly reminded of a fort surrounded by barbed wire—a fort, moreover, where reserve troops were always ready to succour any threatened point in the defence.

For many of his contemporaries the problem about Balfour was to discover the inner

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man. What did he really think? What did he really feel? Was his judgment as sound as his arguments were ingenious? Was he himself convinced by his own arguments? Was there an instinctive subconscious mind which reached conclusions independently of dialectic or ratiocination? Was the extreme delicacy of his apparent attitude really a reflection of his inner being, or merely a superficial cloak which covered a more robust or coarser self?

All these are problems which have remained insoluble during his life, and will probably remain insoluble for posterity. For even his most intimate diary—if such exists—will only extend and strengthen the defence against indiscreet prying into the soul's sanctuary.

The picture I have drawn of this extraordinary man will be incomplete and erroneous if it has not suggested a mind of the highest quality, an attitude towards life attained only by the truly philosophic, a charm, both for men of taste and for women

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of refinement, which has rarely been equalled or approached.

Like Dion Chrysostom, he held that detachment of spirit can be attained without withdrawing from the mundane arena and the clatter of political life. And his whole career proves that what he held as a philosopher he could practise as a politician.

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J. RAMSAY MACDONALD

THE irony which appears to underlie so many of the workings of Providence was rarely made more manifest than when it cast Ramsay MacDonald for the rôle of Labour Foreign Secretary.

Public anticipation would have expected the first Labour Foreign Minister to be little conversant with continental ways or languages, and to be at once ignorant and careless concerning manners. It was easy to conceive the outraged feelings of Canning and Castlereagh, of Palmerston and Granville,

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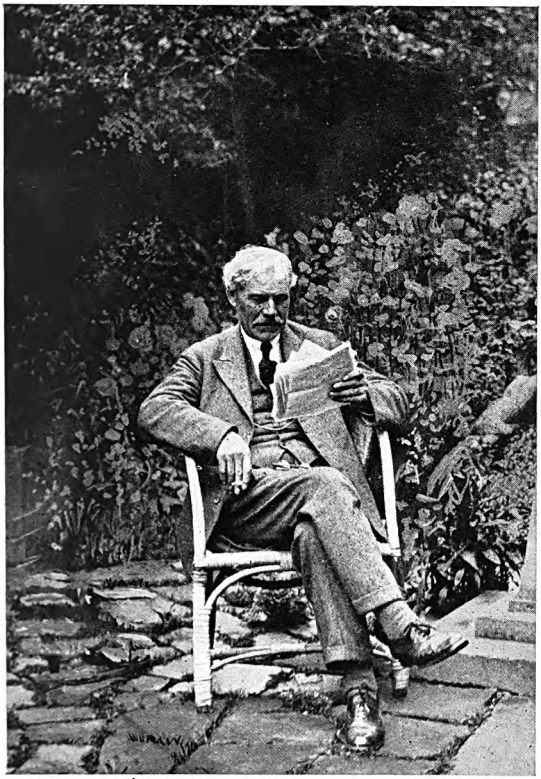

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when they ascertained in the Elysian Fields that their Downing Street mantle had passed to a Labour successor, and to imagine the elaborate explanations they would have devised in order to prove that this temporary indignity had not permanently dimmed the high tradition of their great office.

As it happened—or rather, as Providence in its irony ordained—no apology or explanation was necessary. The first Labour Foreign Secretary was in appearance more distinguished than most of his predecessors in office; in intelligence and personality, he had none of the deficiencies anticipated. A long, fore-and-aft, finely modelled head, deep-set eyes, well-cut features, a tired, reflective air, suggestive of an exhausted aristocratic strain; no aggressiveness, no stridency, but in their place disillusionment, calm and resignation.

In discussion, marked subtlety and some slyness; profound knowledge of the arts of debate; an aversion to the obvious and a rare preoccupation about the secondary effects

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of any given action—the mind attaching more weight to remote than to immediate consequences.

Somewhat unsimple and indirect—always calculating several moves ahead—a system which enables him to escape the danger of receiving an immediate checkmate, but which has also led to missed opportunities for a decisive stroke.

With so long an experience of Trade Union conferences abroad, he was more conversant with foreign men and foreign methods than most English Ministers. In knowledge of languages—whether desirable or not in a Foreign Secretary, and this is a moot point—he was not obviously their inferior. French, "as she is spoke" by successive Foreign Ministers in Downing Street, would be an interesting linguistic study—and conceivably one not devoid of unexpected conclusions.

Ramsay's skill in negotiation proceeded largely from his power of appreciating the internal difficulties of the other side. Accus-

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tomed through life to be supported by colleagues and companions who were not averse to replacing him and many of whom considered their claims as at least equal to his own, he recognised the necessity, in the spokesmen of either side, for extreme caution and for a vigilant eye on the benches behind. He therefore abstained from asking the impossible, and presented his demands in the form least likely to cause his opponent trouble at home.

In another sphere Ramsay belied anticipation. His knowledge of art, his interest in æsthetics, his capacity for discoursing intelligently on past masterpieces and modern developments—was far above the level of the average statesman. The National Art Collections had no better friend—no more intelligent supporter.

The artistic and cultural bias, which Ramsay MacDonald took pleasure in proclaiming, completed the disillusionment of those who had expected Labour to provide Ministers with rough and horny hands. The first

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Labour Premier might be credited with a more delicate sensibility, and a finer touch than certain of his Whig and Tory predecessors. And in administration there were neither the anticipated defects of tact nor the anticipated elements of rough-hewn strength. He succeeded Curzon, and was popular both with the Foreign Office Staff and with Foreign Representatives at the Court of St. James's. There was no palpable or obvious break with tradition. One Minister of Foreign Affairs had succeeded another.

In many departments of administration Ramsay MacDonald held very definite views. Holding the present method liable to produce men of an exaggerated Oxford type, little versed in knowledge of the rough outer world, he was credited with the intention of revising the conditions of selection and training for the diplomatic service. One of his ideas was the creation of a diplomatic Sandhurst, specialising candidates for diplomacy at an earlier stage than is now done. Whether this scheme will ever see light, and

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whether if it does see light it will produce in its *alumni* the necessary acquaintance with the outer world, may be doubtful. It would seem that some other system must be adopted, possibly the German plan of fusing the diplomatic and consular services, or if fusion is undesirable, a more frequent interchange. The obvious defect of the diplomatic service to-day is insufficient acquaintance with commerce, finance, and with the world of politics. Experience is too narrow ; contact with men and affairs too rare. Consular work and an early apprenticeship under Commercial Secretaries and Commercial Councillors would certainly widen the present field of experience.

In another department Ramsay MacDonald was credited with subversive views, namely, a desire to suppress or largely curtail the activities of the Secret Service. His experience of this department concurred with the views of many who have relied upon it, namely, that the reports received are in a large majority of instances of no political

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value, based mainly upon scandal and tittle-tattle, and prepared apparently with no discrimination as to what is really important.

The great achievement of his administration of the Foreign Office was the London Conference of August 1924, which adopted the Dawes Report, and settled—temporarily—the problem of Reparation.

If overshadowed by the even greater importance of the Locarno settlement a year later, the London Conference which was presided over by Ramsay MacDonald with marked authority and tact achieved a definite result. For the time being it removed from the path of international misunderstanding the question of Reparation Payments by Germany. Twelve international conferences had attacked this problem in vain; it had precipitated the fall of no less than thirty-nine Cabinets in the countries of Central and of Western Europe.

To this achievement Ramsay MacDonald has added in his second Premiership the great service to the Empire represented

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by his visit to the United States. In earlier days he had contemplated a series of lectures in the United States, attracted by the thought that such a tour might help in some degree to cement friendship between Great Britain and America. At that time no one could foresee the probability of such an occasion as presented itself in 1929. As the first British Premier to visit the States in an official capacity Ramsay MacDonald not only discharged the duty of his high office with exceptional ability, but won favour by his dignity and nebulous idealism. Whatever service he may subsequently render to the State, his mission across the Atlantic in 1929 will always be remembered as a powerful contribution to world peace, which depends in so marked a degree upon the maintenance of a close friendship between the United States and Great Britain.

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WINSTON CHURCHILL

WHAT are the qualities or defects which make for notoriety? What are the virtues or vices which bring one individual so prominently into public notice and maintain him as a constant subject of discussion, whether in praise or blame? The characteristics required are unquestionably different from the attributes of greatness. Perhaps not incompatible though divergent. Advertisement, however sedulously pursued, is powerless to overcome the absence of original endowment, nor can it be said that fame

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always comes to those who most ardently pursue it.

These reflections rise naturally to the mind in considering the career of Winston Churchill, for no one in living recollection has attained notoriety—in the good sense—to an extent comparable with him. Exceptional as are his talents, brilliant as are his achievements, they would not account for the unique place which he holds in the attention of the public but for the possession by him of some gift withheld from others. This gift is usually described as an outstanding personality. Whether this expression adds much to our comprehension of the matter may be doubted. The fact remains that at any time during the last thirty years, ever since he entered public life, Winston has been the universal and inevitable subject of discussion in every kind of society. Even in those circles least favourable to him, least in sympathy with his ardent personal ambition, no general conversation lasted long without lapsing into Winstoniana. This fact obtained in mess-rooms, in golf

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clubs, and in the most philistine resorts, where in earlier years there was more criticism than approbation. Men and women are led by an obscure but irresistible instinct to discuss Winston.

In insisting upon his unique power of attracting the limelight, much as a lightning-conductor attracts lightning, there is some danger of underrating Winston's real ability. Nothing could be farther from my intention, for he is not only the best equipped political combatant of his generation, but has a facility in many directions which approaches genius. As a speaker and debater he is in the front rank ; as a coiner of phrases unequalled among contemporaries ; as a writer he is the rival if not the superior of the best professionals—in courage undaunted—in openness of mind an example to all.

His mental alertness is astonishing. Perhaps the most picturesque proof of this may be found in his artistic career. Without special interest in art or in the theory of æsthetics, he one day thought he would like to paint.

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Unhampered by arduous training or tuition, he seized paint-brushes and a palette, producing in a short time, without outside assistance or guidance, works of such merit that they were sold at fair prices in the open market in competition with the productions of professional men. Success was so marked that his further development in the direction of artistic achievement was awaited with some trepidation by the fashionable painters of the hour. Happily for them the attempt of well-meaning friends to guide his native genius into the beaten paths of academic correctness so damped his ardour that the artistic impetus petered out, his superfluous energy being later diverted to bricklaying.

The question is sometimes asked whether meteoric apparitions like Winston are to be the normal result of Anglo-American unions. Such a prospect might seem portentous. No anxiety, however, should be felt. Winston was not the child of ordinary parents. On both sides there was exceptional intelligence, unusual force of character. His father was

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reputed to be the most daring politician of his generation. As a speaker the equal of Balfour and Rosebery. His readiness in debate, his unrivalled instinct for the popular mind on any given subject, are brought into clear relief in the brilliant biography which his eldest son has written.

Winston's mother was less well known to the general public, but she was no less remarkable. Born of energetic and enterprising American stock, she won all suffrages on this side of the Atlantic by the peculiar character of her beauty. I have the clearest recollection of seeing her for the first time. It was at the Viceregal Lodge at Dublin. She stood on one side to the left of the entrance. The Viceroy was on a dais at the farther end of the room surrounded by a brilliant staff, but eyes were not turned on him or his consort, but on a dark, lithe figure, standing somewhat apart and appearing to be of another texture to those around her, radiant, translucent, intense. A diamond star in her hair, her favourite ornament—its lustre dimmed by

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the flashing glory of her eyes. More of the panther than of the woman in her look, but with a cultivated intelligence unknown to the jungle. Her courage not less marked than that of her husband—fit mother for descendants of the great Duke. With all these attributes of brilliancy, such kindliness and high spirits that she was universally popular. Her desire to please, her delight in life, and the genuine wish that all should share her joyous faith in it, made her the centre of a devoted circle.

To say of a statesman that he possesses a lively intelligence is to suggest some lightness of mettle. It is impossible to deny liveliness to Winston, but the calibre of the guns he carries is certainly not light. Some of his initiatives may have gone west, notably those with which the public are best acquainted. The defence of Antwerp, the attack on the Dardanelles, injured his reputation for wisdom—injured it perhaps unduly. On the other hand, the bold decision to keep the British Fleet together in July 1914 won for him universal approbation. In my opinion,

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his attitude in each of these events, the successful and the unsuccessful alike, was indicative of a powerful mind, untrammelled by official routine, unaffrighted by personal responsibility.

With regard to Antwerp and the Dardanelles, it is by no means proved that the conception was wrong: half-hearted adoption by colleagues, delay in execution, may have marred what was in itself sound strategy. It is worthy of note regarding Antwerp that von Kluck, judging after the event and with full knowledge of all the circumstances, has expressed his adherence to a strategic plan not dissimilar to that of Antwerp, viz. a plan in which the British Expeditionary Force would have been sent to Amiens threatening the flank of the German right in its advance on Paris, a conception broadly analogous to Winston's. In the case of the Dardanelles, all German authorities who have written on the subject are agreed that the British attack was within an ace of succeeding. Success would have caused panic in Constantinople,

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and would have driven the German Embassy from Pera into the wilds of Asia Minor.

Some critics have held that Churchill's real talent lies in literature and in rhetoric rather than in administration and statesmanship. It has been indicated that there are reasons for dissenting from the view that there is in him any absence of practical wisdom. Perhaps it is too soon to pass a final verdict. When the time comes for the publication of the very numerous memoranda which he submitted during the War to every Cabinet of which he was a member, judgment will be pronounced. No one has left on paper fuller material for condemnation or acquittal. While others talked, Winston both talked and wrote. This is clearly apparent from Asquith's Memoirs. A further impression is derived from them, namely that Winston had more ideas, more electrical force, and presented political memoranda in greater profusion than any other member of the Cabinet, while in strategic proposals he was hardly less prolific than the entire General Staff.

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If a balance is to be struck between literary talent on one side and political ability on the other, the merit of both has to be estimated, and the literary merit of Churchill stands high. In the long course of British history it is doubtful if any Minister of the first rank, burdened as all Ministers must be by the cares of office, has made a contribution to history and literature superior to Churchill's. He stands the test, whether in volume, range, or quality. So unique a record reveals not only a mind of great fertility, but an extraordinary facility for keeping alive contemporaneously —without mutual injury—interests of various kinds.

It might be expected that such a man, driven forward by a teeming brain, tormented by grandiose conceptions struggling for expression and execution, would have the haggard appearance of the jaded worker, or would suffer in an exaggerated degree from the nervosity of the *genus irritabile vatum*.

Nothing of the kind; Winston is genial, affectionate, humorous—the best of friends,

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a generous opponent, taking criticism and enduring disappointment with a smile, half amused at his own career and half surprised at his astonishing success. Still boyish in mind and manner after twenty years of high office, retaining a faculty for the acquisition of knowledge which has not deserted him with increasing years. He might, indeed, without undue assumption, blazon on his escutcheon Goya's noble profession of faith, " Aun aprendo " (I continue to learn) rather than the less appropriate motto of the Churchills, " Fiel pero desdichado " (Faithful but unfortunate).

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THE EARL OF OXFORD AND ASQUITH

BREADTH—kindliness—and a classical mind. No better schooled intellect could emerge from Oxford. Asquith sprang from the head of Balliol fully armed. So perfectly was he equipped that the Bar added little to his intellectual resources. Despite successful and remunerative years in substantial practice, his port of origin remained Oxford—not the Temple. So much was this the case that nothing contributed more to darkening the closing years of his life than the selection of a rival candidate in his place as

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Chancellor of the University of Oxford. It may indeed have precipitated the end. With a profound affection for the Bar, which he considered the finest profession in the world, he never sank to a narrow legal outlook, nor was his manner of speech characteristically forensic. The impression he made in early years was that of a man trained for all emergencies—so endowed that he feared no surprise, so educated that no question could find him at a loss.

Surely this was the man who in a vast international crisis would rise to the loftiest heights. Dire necessity would overcome a tendency towards indolence and rouse all latent capacities. To most of his admirers the Great War appeared the supreme occasion which would evoke in Asquith the fullest development of his powers. His magnanimity and his classical temper would stand apparent in the sight of man.

In the earlier stages they were not disappointed. By his patience and moderation he brought a united nation into the war—and

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he had the wisdom to place at the head of the Army the chief who had the clearest vision as to the realities and requirements of the terrific contest. Later, public opinion and the Press deserted him; it was alleged that the war period was unsuited for the exercise of Asquith's qualities and talents, his very virtues unfitting him for the task. He lacked demoniacal force: he was without the capacity of hatred. His qualities—breadth and balance, his logic, his reasonableness—were detrimental to the successful prosecution of the brutalities and horrors of war.

Had Asquith left the political scene before 1914, his reputation would stand higher than it does to-day. Had he returned to power in 1918, when peace was made, it is the belief of many that he might have rendered at that time incomparable service to the Empire and to Europe. He would have been at his greatest at the Peace Conference, and it is to be regretted that his services there, so freely offered, were not made use of. His temper was precisely that which was required for

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the negotiation of a lasting peace. His moderation, his fairness, his courage in facing temporary unpopularity, might have secured at Versailles something more judicial than the Treaty eventually signed.

Perhaps the most unexpected features in Asquith's character were his devotion to party and his erroneous estimate of the relative value of words and actions. A man of so cool a temper and so wide an outlook should have been above these defects, habitual as they are in Parliamentarians. To the end of his career he had difficulty in recognising merit in a political opponent unless he happened to be a brother barrister; and he was disposed to rate a brilliant speech above a battle won. The explanation of the latter error of judgment may perhaps be found in his veneration for the House of Commons. This assembly he regarded not only as the centre of political power in the British Empire, but as an unrivalled testing-ground of true value and of capacity for statesmanship. In his view the man who was best able to

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influence the House of Commons was necessarily the best fitted to assist in the government of a great Empire. In practice he admitted no other criterion.

In his later years he occasionally addressed the House of Lords, esteeming it the worst audience in the world, a judgment few impartial critics would endorse. With Asquith this opinion was the result of an ingrained fidelity to another place, and a final proof of his preference for the arena in which he had attained pre-eminence. The quality of his oratory was indeed well suited to a House of Commons audience. Smooth, dignified sentences, rounded off without weakness or ragged edges, no special brilliancy, no attempt at humour or wit—forcible argument expressed in adequate language, without rhetoric or purple patch. No invective, no sarcasm, but sanity, moderation, courage. His speeches, invariably appropriate to the occasion. While efficient for their purpose, there was no attempt at the sublime; no Gettysburg. In resource and readiness

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Asquith was supreme : at a crisis producing almost mechanically an effective and telling argument. Occasionally, in a valedictory oration like that on Alfred Lyttelton or on the Duke of Devonshire, he rose to a high level—deep feeling expressed in perfect form. The finest characteristic of his platform utterances was a certain dignity consistently maintained. The appeal was to reason—not to passion or to prejudice. There was no condescension to low rhetoric designed to obtain applause rather than to convince.

Mention has already been made of Asquith's devotion to party and his difficulty in seeing merit except in those of his persuasion. His under-estimate of political rivals was indeed notorious, no less than his profound belief that the salvation of the country could only proceed from Liberal inspiration, could only be accomplished by Liberal instrumentality.

Holding these views with assured conviction, Providence could inflict no more cruel blow than to ordain that at the end of his

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career he left a Liberal Party shattered by dissension, divided and apparently not far from temporary dissolution. Happily he never suspected that any responsibility for the catastrophe could be imputed to him. It was manifest that the evil proceeded from that nefarious influence from the west, descending to methods old Liberals spurned, and utilising the machinery of a misguided and too influential Press.

Men of extreme readiness of speech are seldom hard workers, and Asquith in his later years was no exception to the rule. The difference in quality between his first improvisation and the final elaboration of the draft was so insignificant that no one as economical of labour as Asquith would waste time and energy on revision.

There were other things to do. There was life to enjoy: serenity was indispensable to judgment, and relaxation was necessary to serenity. Even in the most anxious times a spare hour in the day could always be devoted to romantic converse with intellectual and

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gifted women. As a relief from the tedium of Cabinets, correspondence with them was not to be disdained, and indeed from the number of his extant epistles, written from the Cabinet Room, meetings there must have been prolific of moments from which solace of some kind was requisite. Throughout life, he enjoyed the support of a prodigious memory. Even in old age, he could recite passages not only of poetry but of prose with verbal fidelity. The passages committed to memory were selected with rare literary taste and judgment. Few have had a more delicate sense of quality in literature—none a more classic taste.

In many respects, notably in the matter of political dignity, Asquith might be a model for succeeding statesmen. He nobly disdained the minor arts of popularity, never abasing himself to curry favour with his followers or subordinates. His public record was there, his speeches could be listened to or read, his service to the country was well known—still more his service to the Liberal

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Party. Let these suffice: he would stoop to no personal cajolery.

Towards the Press he maintained an even more antique severity: no confabulation, no backdoor entrance to the garden, no secret information given in advance to friends or in return for special support. The House of Commons was the arena—the constitutional source of power; there must be no infidelity to that basic concept. Incapable of doubtful methods for his own benefit, he was less resolute against them in the sacred interest of the party.

With regard to money, disdain; some carelessness: his carelessness was indeed so great that it eventually landed him in circumstances of serious difficulty. And this attitude in pecuniary affairs was typical of his general bearing. A contempt for the petty, the mean, and the purely personal.

In some historic controversies he played a courageous and brilliant part, notably in the defence of Free Trade. When Chamberlain was at the height of his popularity he followed

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him from city to city, speaking a few days later than the great advocate of Protection, and controverting his arguments with unbounded courage and ability.

In his family life Asquith was singularly happy. Married twice to women of pre-eminent spirit and independence, he was surrounded by a numerous progeny of such intellectual attainment that in different lines each individual has achieved distinction, while taken in the aggregate they have been held to excel any group in the three kingdoms in conversational momentum, understood to mean volume multiplied by velocity. Returning somewhat humbled and irritated from this brilliant circle, a famous conversationalist was heard to lament, " My desire is to shine, not to be shone upon."

Asquith's mind was sound rather than quick—sound, clear, and decisive. No one knew on what he based decision. It was certainly not on private discussion. Talking things over he abominated to such a degree that he resorted to every possible device to

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evade it. Colleagues and experts were occasionally invited "to have a quiet talk with Henry." History records no instance of anyone having had it. The Prime Minister could not be found; he was busy; he had a headache; he had gone for a drive; anything rather than the ordeal of talking things out. This peculiarity went so far that even his sons could seldom obtain advice or guidance. As for blame or criticism, that was out of the question in the case either of family or colleagues. With servants he would submit to inconvenience for weeks rather than reprove anyone, while no member of the household was ever dismissed except by proxy. This unwillingness to cause pain or annoyance was indicative of the indolent generosity of his nature.

The World War demanded other qualities, a more ruthless temperament, a harder touch. It was a task requiring intense will-power, absolute concentration, and a certain harshness. Asquith declined to worship at the altar of Bellona. A man so true to his own

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qualities could not bend to circumstance. He was what he was ; neither more nor less. Times might change ; he remained the same. The Goddess of War was unappeased. Asquith fell.

History will not say that he failed—will say rather that he remained true to himself ; a world convulsion had upset normal values and relative worth : a great and generous man had been borne down by fate in a period not suited to his genius.

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SIR AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

THE basis of Austen Chamberlain's policy during the first months of his tenure of the Foreign Office was the closest alliance with France. His admiration for France was proclaimed in every speech he made : no other Power—no Dominion even—was mentioned with similar warmth. It was therefore presumed that the project of a military pact between France and England would find a warm advocate in him. It appeared certain that England would become engaged in what would

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amount to an anti-German defensive league.

The idea of such a league was not popular in England. It had been urged upon us by France ever since the United States refusal of the Anglo-American Guarantee Treaty in 1919. Briand had pressed it with persistence and skill. Poincaré had demanded it as a right, and had endeavoured to impose it upon Lloyd George at Boulogne in 1922, with words that were not far short of inacceptable pressure. The reception of the idea in England had never been enthusiastic; as time went on, English opinion hardened against it. Lloyd George had, indeed, acceded to the idea, but he did so with evident reluctance, and had on many occasions endeavoured to limit the scope of our engagement and restrict the *casus belli*. Moreover, he urged the abolition of submarines. One specific French demand he had definitely refused, viz. that the amount of military assistance England was prepared to furnish should be laid down in advance.

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It is of interest to note, as showing the state of public opinion previous to the Ruhr occupation, that, while reluctant to undertake precise engagements of too onerous a character, Lloyd George had not raised any objection to the principle of a military agreement binding England to defend France—unaccompanied by a reciprocal clause guaranteeing the German frontier against French attack. Germany was still considered the potential aggressor—the one State rash enough and evil enough to contemplate a new war.

Up to the end of 1922, public opinion in England, while hostile to the idea of accepting binding obligations, acquiesced sullenly in the general policy, perceiving no alternative. But when public opinion is driven to a given course merely because there is, at the moment, no apparent substitute, it is apt to spring back on the first favourable occasion. And this occasion presented itself in 1923. The occupation of the Ruhr excited profound distrust in England. It revealed the fact that peace in Western Europe was liable to be

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disturbed—not only by Germany, but by France. By the forcible seizure of Germany's richest province, France and Belgium had shown that military predominance was on their side, and that they were prepared, on occasion, to take advantage of it. Under the circumstances, there was neither common sense nor sound policy in binding ourselves to defend those who, for the present at any rate, needed no defence, if by so doing we perpetuated war animosities and divided Europe into two hostile groups. It must be made clear that France, who possessed—and had now proved that she possessed—the means to do so, would not infringe the frontiers of others. Our fundamental object was pacification—a one-sided engagement was not the path towards it.

Considerations of this nature were so much in the public mind that Ministers were influenced. Whether they originally intended to sign a Unilateral anti-German Pact may be uncertain. What is certain is that the idea, if originally held, was abandoned.

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Reciprocity—a reciprocal guarantee of frontiers between France and Germany—became the only basis on which England would agree to guarantee French territory from attack.

It was in the negotiation on this basis that Chamberlain rendered Europe such signal service. He was peculiarly well placed to exercise decisive influence. It has sometimes been said that his honesty and impartiality carried the day. It would be more correct to attribute success to his honesty and partiality. For he continued to exhibit, and indeed to parade, his strong attachment to France. When, therefore, he told the French representatives that no other course was possible than the signature of a Bilateral Treaty, they accepted his word, as they would not have accepted that of a less friendly statesman. France regarded Austen as a trustworthy lover. Even the Quai d'Orsay, which is rarely inspired by emotion of the gentler sort, realised, because Chamberlain had said it, that the Unilateral Treaty idea was not

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practical politics. There was only one possibility for France if she desired to obtain real security on her frontiers and the support of England, viz. to adopt the reciprocal, bilateral basis.

As regards Germany, Chamberlain's partiality for France exercised no deterrent effect. German opinion on the military situation differed fundamentally from the view held in Paris. There, German aggression was a constant bogey. In Berlin, even the most bellicose Teutons discarded, as unrealisable, the conception of successful military aggression or invasion of the French frontier. Their technical military understanding realised the impossibility of carrying on modern warfare without "matériel"—notably without aeroplanes and heavy artillery. If other countries still feared German military aggression, they made a false estimate of Germany's present power. This mistaken appreciation by foreign nations might be welcomed by Germany, since it tended to facilitate negotiation. If foreign military

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advisers supposed that the unarmed would attack the fully armed, and were prepared to advocate concessions in order to buy off the unarmed, so much the better. As for Germany herself, she had no such illusions. She desired peace and security for her own territory. She was therefore ready to negotiate on the basis of equality and of reciprocal safety. The German Government was even prepared to submit all differences with France to arbitration, and to renounce all claims to Alsace-Lorraine. The most delicate point was that regarding her Eastern frontier, but here, again, German Ministers were willing to give a solemn pledge against the use of force in any attempt to rectify the frontier as laid down by the Treaty of Versailles.

Chamberlain realised the possibilities of negotiation on this basis. A modification of his previous attitude would bring him into line with English public opinion, which had become definitely hostile to a Unilateral Pact against Germany. His extreme honesty and

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uprightness protected him from any charge of time serving. The opportunity was unique. He had the courage to take the fullest advantage of it. Without hesitation or reserve, he pressed forward the cause of the Bilateral Pact with vigour and conviction. It was said at the time that his sincerity and good faith enabled him to modify his previous attitude in a manner only equalled by one prototype, namely, St. Paul. And in vigour and zeal he was not inferior to his apostolic forerunner.

English diplomacy never achieved a more striking success than the Treaty of Locarno. The agreement formally adopted by the plenipotentiaries of France, Germany, England, and Italy was drawn up on a basis of conciliation, so complete and far-reaching that a year before it would have been ridiculed as Utopian in any of the countries that became signatories. Indeed, immediately before Locarno, a vast majority of the leading diplomatists of Europe considered the whole negotiation as sentimental, idealistic, and doomed to certain failure.

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Courage was requisite on the part of Chamberlain to take the line he did; skill and authority were demanded to direct the negotiations at Locarno; above all, it was indispensable that the Foreign Ministers of France and Germany should feel confidence in the absolute integrity of the British representative. It was his power of inspiring others with a belief in his complete reliability which won the day by creating an atmosphere of possible agreement. Good faith contributed more powerfully to pacification than honeyed words—more than any subtle combination of intrigue reminiscent of the old diplomacy. In the relations established at Locarno, eloquence became unnecessary, and finesse gave way for a time to frankness and plain dealing.

After the Treaty of Locarno and the achievement of bringing Germany into the League of Nations, Chamberlain reverted to more simple tasks. His general attitude was one of persistent attachment to France, and he incurred considerable criticism, since

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the influence in Paris which he sacrificed so much to maintain was unsuccessful in bringing about the evacuation of the Rhineland by French and Allied troops. This evacuation had appeared a natural and legitimate consequence of Locarno, and its prolonged postponement left the task of pacification incomplete.

There was, further, the question of relations between England and America. Regarding these, the public felt that Chamberlain was less friendly to an Anglo-American pact than to one between England and France. Matters reached a climax when it became public that a naval agreement had been arrived at between England and France, which was construed as being hostile to America.

In the General Election of 1929, the announcement that Chamberlain, in the event of a Conservative success, would remain at the Foreign Office, failed to secure for his party any notable accession of voting strength. While it was realised that Chamberlain had undoubtedly achieved much at the Foreign

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Office, it was thought that the possible advantages obtainable through his methods and his declared—perhaps over-emphasised—attitude were exhausted. Close union with France had without doubt carried Europe through years of considerable difficulty, but the time had come when a new orientation would be at once safer and more agreeable; Anglo-American amity became the leading objective in English foreign policy.

Chamberlain was not the man to deviate from his previous attitude or from his rooted convictions. He left the Foreign Office with a record of unswerving fidelity to the French connection.

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THE EARL OF BIRKENHEAD

NEITHER "Plantagenet Smith," nor "Tudor Smith"—but plain "Smith"; that was his origin, and he will have no other. F. E. for short and for affection.

No false pretension, no assumption of virtue, but an easy joyous carelessness, a vast contempt for petty standards and for the blame of weaker brethren.

Almost out of place in this generation, unless, indeed, he heralds what is to come. Certainly out of place in the Victorian Age in which he was born. Could the Prince

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Consort have survived he would have wondered more than ever how it was that, with such men as leaders, England had contrived to become so great and so respected.

In what century should Birkenhead be placed? Certainly in no barbaric age. His learning, his profound knowledge of law, his classic judgments, his elaborate insolence, his studied invective, place him indubitably among the disciples of culture. And yet he seems hardly subtle enough, nor sufficiently artistic, for a Greek of the great period—too material and exuberant for Attic taste. Nor again is he Roman: too easy-going, too facile, lacking an adequate regard for dignity —no "severitas."

The Renaissance in Italy is nearer the mark: extreme good looks in youth would be appropriate, but among the petty Italian States there was duplicity with a strong proclivity for cloak and dagger attacks in dark alleys. Birkenhead may not be austere; he is fundamentally honest. Full of preferences, prejudices, and convictions; too faithful to these to become

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LORD BIRKENHEAD.

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a *condottiere* fighting for either side, or to lend his services where his heart is not.

And so, other periods and other lands eliminated in the search for a spiritual home, we come to the Low Countries where life was still influenced by the tradition of the old Burgundian Court. Here we find an affinity. What a loss to Franz Hals that Birkenhead could not be his model. How magnificent would be the portrait. Painter and subject absolutely suited.

A riotous joy in life—provided life affords enough stimuli—an indifference to criticism—delight in physical enjoyment. Bacchus, Venus, and the Palestra ; perhaps more the exuberant undergraduate than the roystering Cavalier.

With all this—who has seen more clear and far in political problems, who has been more often right ? Belonging to the extreme section of Conservatism through temperamental affinity and intolerance of petty regulation, he has continued to see straighter and farther than those with whom he associates.

On the Irish question—on post-war re-

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lations with Germany—and on many other problems he has been far in advance of his group, in advance, indeed, of general opinion. Concerning Reform in India, although Secretary of State for four years, no one then knew his judgment on the problem in its broadest sense. Regarding this he has been, for him, strangely reserved.

The truth is that behind the Franz Hals Burgundian there is a very shrewd, hard-headed Lancastrian. Endowed with common sense and caution, qualities so inherent that, though diluted, they are never quenched either by the rhetorical exigencies of after-dinner oratory or by the traditional obligations of conviviality.

The circle of his friends, already wide, would be enlarged but for apprehension of that strange inclination to the offensive and a certain predilection for the insolent. Those who know him best appreciate him most, and hold that his is perhaps the most robust and virile intellect of the epoch.

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"THE SOULS"

IT would be ungrateful to deny the beneficial influence of the Souls on a certain section of English Society, or to question the change in the manners, customs, and prejudices of London in the 'nineties, which proceeded from the initiative of this remarkable group of friends.

I was in a good position to judge, being neither within the circle nor without. Residing mainly abroad in those years, I visited England at frequent intervals, and had ample opportunity to estimate and appreciate the Souls

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from both far and near. I could also compare them with other groups in London and abroad. The impression they made was that of a circle of exceptionally open-minded people effectively engaged in bursting the bonds of irksome social tradition, and in opening the way to a more rational and agreeable mode of life.

It may be interesting to examine what their characteristics were and what the qualities they prized and cultivated. First and foremost, intelligence. No matter what the origin, if a new-comer proved clever and agreeable, he was welcome. Secondly, a certain want of deference for rank and wealth. Vere de Vere and Midas, though not excluded, had no entry by virtue either of birth or fortune. Something more was requisite—an individual contribution to the pool, and an acceptance of the group standard of belief that what mattered most was what people are, not what they have, nor what their lineage may be.

New ideas are naturally resented. The old society world, which they startled, was

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in the main territorial, traditional, and prejudiced. Its standards precluded innovation, and served to entrench dullness under the cloak of rank and station. With the Souls, though rank was no detriment, neither was it a passport. By itself it gave no entrance.

The Souls were not militant reformers, and had no ambition to effect conversions. They merely claimed freedom for themselves. Their creed amounted to this: We do not aspire to lead you—we leave you where you belong—probably to Bœotia—but we ourselves will draw nearer Athens and enjoy what pleasure we may from a mode of life we consider intelligent and agreeable. Feudality has had its day—let us be free from benighted prejudices.

Within the group there were, of course, differences both of doctrine and practice. More dissimilar natures cannot be imagined than those of the two most prominent members—Arthur Balfour and Margot Tennant. The one 90 per cent. intellectual, the finest texture of silk; the other pre-eminent for

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temperament and dash—audacious, impulsive, the strongest homespun—homespun through which no shaft could penetrate. Both iconoclasts: the one from irony and polite negation, the other from an inveterate addiction to shock tactics.

Comparisons may be odious, but without them classification is difficult: they serve to fix ideas and to give precision to appreciations. So, without qualification or reserve, it may be said that, after sixty years' experience in half the countries of Europe, I recall no social group equal in charm, interest, and variety to the Souls of 1890. Intellectual without being highbrow or pretentious; critical without envy; unprejudiced but not unprincipled; emancipated but not aggressive; literary but athletic, free from the narrowness of clique, yet bound together in reciprocal appreciation and affection. No association or society had less ostentation or pretence; none was more free from false standards, dull conventions and antiquated prejudices.

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How was it that such a dispassionate judge as Lord Haldane failed in his Autobiography to recognise the merit of the Souls' contribution to the art and wisdom of life? The country of their origin was the Lowlands, from which he also came, while many of their mental characteristics were undoubtedly Scotch. A passion for education and reading —an appreciation of verbal felicity—enjoyment of literary style—affinity to French culture—a taste for introspection and self-analysis—all these are Scotch rather than English, and all these marked the Souls.

With Haldane, the point of intellectual divergence was probably their distaste for the more obscure doctrines of German philosophy: partiality for these is barely consistent with social scintillation, and is apt to blunt the point of dialogue and dialectic. The Souls, it must be admitted, were brilliant rather than profound; indeed, they aspired to nothing higher, and here in a friendly way they parted company from the sage of Cloan, weighted as he was with loftier aspirations.

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If the dominant mental tone was largely Lowland, there was a secondary inspiration of rare quality and of peculiar charm. This proceeded from the inheritors of the Melbourne tradition. The blood of the Lambs, though diluted in the progress of time, remained lively enough to influence the whole group with its enjoyment of life, its frank zest for amusement, and its negligence of conventional standards.

Political success is no certain test of intellectual quality; literary fame, though less misleading, is no infallible criterion. Yet that amongst the Souls were so many who attained subsequent eminence, both in literature and politics, is evidence that they were no insignificant social clique. To have brought together statesmen and writers of future distinction and to have attracted the most beautiful and gifted women of the time is, however, less their title to fame than to have helped to liberate contemporaries and posterity from worn-out inhibitions and from the blighting thraldom of prejudice.

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AMBROSE McEVOY

SOME years ago it was the habit among Art Critics to write of McEvoy as of a promising artist who had deteriorated through becoming too fashionable—as one who, possessing artistic ability of a high order, had sacrificed his genius to the painting of society women in elaborate clothes. No accusation could be more fundamentally wrong. Fashion had no hold on McEvoy. His elfin mind moved in spheres uninfluenced by vogue; regions in which Court Guides and Court Circulars are regarded as at once abstruse and vulgar.

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McEvoy's portraiture had in it nothing that was actual or precise. It was a paraphrase not a copy—a translation which added an ethereal element; a recollection of selected characteristics rather than a representation of the full outline and lineaments. It was poetry, not prose—and in its highest achievements justified the claim that McEvoy was a Shelley among painters. No one could associate closely with McEvoy without realising an intimate resemblance between the two natures.

In remoteness from practical affairs, in absorption in the artistic and the ideal, and in unworldliness, the affinity was marked. With McEvoy an indication of this was heard in his treble voice, which seemed hardly human. In moments of excitement, when discussing artistic problems, his tones soared into the scarcely intelligible.

For portrait likenesses, in the photographic sense, McEvoy had little aptitude and still less concern.

His talent was the opposite of that of the

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AMBROSE McEVOY.

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caricaturist, or of the draughtsman who seizes on prominent features and exaggerates them. McEvoy selected not the features, which could be extended into the droll, perhaps not even those that were most characteristic, but those which were susceptible of poetic rendering, and which lent themselves to a composition of beauty. Beauty, as he understood it, was strictly limited to exclude prettiness, but it comprehended all the model could suggest in the direction of fanciful and indefinite charm.

It is clear that with these attributes and peculiarities his most successful efforts in portraiture have had women for their subjects and not men. The firm features of the banker, the strong jaw and bold eye of the military hero do not lend themselves to fanciful and indefinite treatment; a V.C. cannot be portrayed in a medium appropriate to an elf.

During the war McEvoy's friends had urged him to accept commissions to paint distinguished warriors, in the belief that a sterner material than that to which he was

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accustomed might make good his supposed deficiencies, strengthen his drawing, and encourage a firm bold line. But the result went to prove that in art if not in morals men are wise to recognise their own limitations—that they are well advised to develop an individual gift rather than attempt to correct Providence by a futile endeavour to remedy the gaps in their own equipment. Talents which have real charm are generally limited; the essential point is to be exquisite within personal capacity, and that McEvoy was.

What will be McEvoy's place in the judgment of posterity? what will be his level in the auction rooms of A.D. 2000? Will he attain the market eminence of Pinkie or the golden altitude of the Romney children?

None can say. The verdict will certainly depend upon something entirely different from artistic merit as preached in the jargon of to-day. But if the tide of transatlantic fashion, or the fancy of the then richest country, possibly our Colonial Empire or some South American community, turns in

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the direction of the graceful, the delicate, and the imaginative, then we believe that none of the moderns have better hope of being compared to Gainsborough than the exquisite and elusive painter whose premature death English art has such reason to deplore.

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JOHN SINGER SARGENT

SUPERFICIALLY a Franz Hals—but only superficially. The inward nature was different. There could be no greater contrast than that between Sargent's outward appearance and the inner man.

To look at him, one imagined a roystering, jovial free liver—working at rare intervals between frequent orgies—and caring only for the grosser enjoyments of life.

The truth was other. A severely ordered day. Work during every hour of light: study, and refined enjoyment; music when

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JOHN SARGENT, R.A.

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painting was no longer possible. An intense appreciation of letters—and a delicate taste in them—an intimate knowledge of French and Russian literature and music. No orgies, nor a suspicion of them. Perhaps some romance, but, broadly viewed, neither wine nor women played much part. There was no time for them. Wine dulled the brain and induced somnolence. There was work to do; too few hours—too few days in which to do it. As for women, they were even more disturbing.

No more faithful votary of the Muses ever applied his whole being to art.

A curious contradiction between his mind, as revealed in conversation, and the impression given by his canvases. In conversation, the effect was that of great thoughts struggling for expression which they never found—the right word would not come even after painful and prolonged search. But the concept was certainly there.

With pencil or paint-brush, it was otherwise.

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The expression was almost too easy, rapid, correct, faultless—an exact reproduction of what was intended—of what the eye saw—the outward lineaments of the model or object.

No idealisation, no penetrating psychology, no piercing revelation of character or nature, a marked absence of intuitive judgment as to the really essential, no elimination of the incidental and non-significant. The facility of rendering was so great that its penetration became superfluous. The object of painting was to reproduce the apparent, not to seek out the latent or the obscure.

Goya said " Le Portrait—c'est une question de parti pris." This was neither Sargent's theory nor his practice. He painted what he saw, and painted it with consummate technical mastery. It was not for him to take views about hidden qualities or defects—to imagine virtues and vices, capacities or deficiencies, depths and mysteries, which possibly were not there. Having the object before his eyes, he could render it. He was

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a painter, not a psycho-analyst. Freud was well enough in his own line—but that was a different story.

In the last years he wearied of portraiture, finding society models monotonous and fearing perhaps that their sameness would infect his manner of depicting them. He therefore broke new ground and produced for the Library of Boston a dignified and animated presentment of the Religions of the World. At this period much of his time was passed in Italy, and he brought thence such vivid renderings of sunlight that they overcame the gloom of a Chelsea November. During 1917 he was for some time in the Amiens war zone, and proved that he possessed the secret of evoking compassion by a profound and moving study of gassed men being led back to a clearing station.

His personal preferences in artists were unexpected. He placed Greco on a par with Velasquez, and the funeral of Count Orgaz he considered the greatest picture in the world. Why this choice? Neither in con-

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ception nor in execution is there any similarity between the two men. His old master, Carolus Duran, he continued to admire despite decline in current fashion. Delacroix he thought highly of, and also Fromentin—the latter more as a writer on art than as a painter. He was never tired of reading Fromentin's letters on the Dutch school.

In literature an unexpected taste was Balzac. He read again and again La Duchesse de Langeais in the Histoire des Treize. And he died with Balzac in his hand.

An entirely lovable nature, generous, faithful, affectionate, unassuming—a great technician—a brilliant craftsman—a man who achieved what so few achieve—the fullest development of special powers within a given sphere.

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RAYMOND POINCARÉ

OF the statesmen of the pre-war, war, and post-war period, no one has been so long on the stage as Poincaré. No one has exercised a greater influence, for good or evil, perhaps for good and evil.

In July 1914, when Austria sent the fatal Note to Serbia, Poincaré had long been the guiding influence in French policy. To-day, eleven years after the close of the war, Poincaré is still the dominating personality in France; through all the intervening period he has been almost continuously in office,

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continually influential. In the France of the Third Republic so long a lease of authority is almost unknown. With a nation prone to change it might have been expected that such fidelity could be inspired only by one personifying the spectacular qualities the French are held to admire. The object of their choice would have to satisfy their aspiration to glory, and be characterised by exceptional personal brilliancy. But this is not Poincaré. He has none of the outward qualities anticipated. In appearance not particularly French, in mind still less so. Sturdy, concentrated, close-knit; none of the graces, no literary scintillation and no elegance, but in a marked degree the peculiar strength and the tenacity associated with a physique below normal height. If the phrase "Atlantean shoulders" is understood to denote power to bear heavy burdens for long periods, power to persist without faltering or repentance, without consideration or reconsideration, in any course which reason may counsel or passion

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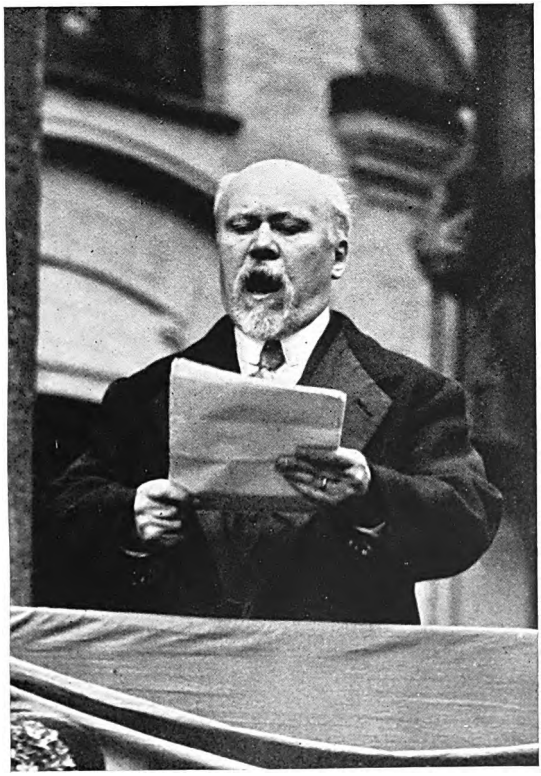

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determine, these words may justly be applied to him.

It may be asked how it is that, if Poincaré has few or none of the attributes usually supposed to excite French enthusiasm, he has remained so trusted, so adequately popular. The answer is simple. France, with a true instinct, felt that the post-war period would be one consisting of legal and financial disputes, and that the best lawyer to whom she could entrust her case in these debates was the dour little son of mathematical stock from the German frontier. His legal aptitude was undoubted, his family record ensured a command of figures, his place of origin in Lorraine endowed him with a close-up acquaintance of German wiles. He was known to be a man of precise mind, capable of infinite application, and disposing of an unrivalled capacity for work. As a lawyer he could be trusted to know his brief from end to end, as an advocate he could be counted upon to make the most of the weakness of the opponent and not to

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abate a tittle of French legal rights without defending them with relentless persistency.

This was the man required by post-war mentality.

That he should have wide views, broad sympathies, and extended vision was not what France demanded. These qualities would be incompatible with others more essential to the immediate purpose, more appropriate to the work on hand. The Preacher has said, "There is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven; a time to love and a time to hate." This was not a time to love, nor was Poincaré the man for that purpose.

The selection by France was in a large measure justified. Poincaré fought his case with determination, with obstinacy, blind to any interest other than that of France in the narrowest sense. He was not far from complete success. He was also not far from compromising the whole future of European pacification.

What was his aim? To make France

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supreme on the Continent, supported by satellite allies in Eastern and Central Europe. Confident of English acquiescence in anything her ally might propose or undertake; indifferent to German hostility; relying on overpowering military strength. To make supremacy complete it was necessary to hold the Rhine and to occupy the Ruhr. The former would bestow security, the latter would carry with it economic dominion and ensure the necessary supplies of steel and coal in the event of prolonged hostilities.

It was an alluring possibility—" Une iliade qu'Homère n'inventerait pas." To attain such a consummation it would be necessary to rule out or render negative during 1921 and 1922 all proposals likely to lead to a premature settlement. Poincaré was intransigence itself. Either complete reparation or, what was possibly more to be desired, the occasion to play a great hazard.

Certain points in the programme might go beyond the Treaty of Versailles; this objection was amenable to legal skill. The funda-

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mental character of the combination could be veiled ; plausible reasons could be found for any action considered necessary. Germany was not fulfilling—possibly not endeavouring to fulfil—her reparation obligations. Were not sanctions justified ? If they were justified, why not demand such measures as were advantageous to France both in military and economic spheres ? Such a course would be both legitimate and effective. It was adopted. If the Allies were hesitating or hostile, France could act alone. This she did. In the early spring of 1923 it looked indeed as if the great hazard could not only be played for, but won.

Had the Ruhr occupation, which was entered upon on January 10, 1923, achieved, smoothly and rapidly, its intended purpose, had it proceeded without encountering effective resistance, had the mine-owners and miners continued to work under French occupation in the presence of French bayonets, a *de facto* position would have been gained far superior to the legal position laid down

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at Versailles. Germany would have ceased to be a danger, she would indeed have ceased to be a Great Power, a country militarily crippled, economically subservient. France would enjoy a position of dominance comparable with that obtained by her after the Peace of Tilsit.

Thoughts of this kind probably passed through the minds of many of Poincaré's supporters. On the other hand, the more prudent among them were bound to recognise that Germany would not acquiesce tamely in such a solution. She would be permanently hostile. What of that? She was powerless. If it was feared that she might seek a close alliance with the forces of disorder and unrest in Russia, was not a combination between the two inconceivable, their elements being so politically adverse? Even in combination, could the two do much?

Again, it was true that English public opinion was hostile to the whole policy. Official circles in London might be amenable, but the mass of the people of England were

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clearly antagonistic to the adventure. They deemed it unfair, illegal, and fraught with danger.

Further, there was American opinion to be considered. It was held that the demands for reparation made by the French were excessive, and it was more than suspected that such demands were put forward mainly with the hope of eliciting refusal, a refusal which would be an excuse for sanctions. "Impossible demands followed by damned fool sanctions" one American observed. Apart from public opinion in this or that country, was it not clear that by this vindictive action the whole cause of international reconciliation was imperilled; that pacification must be delayed several years, if not compromised for ever?

It is still uncertain whether these considerations and reluctance to face opposition from England and America would have sufficed to induce Poincaré to modify his original plan. The matter did not come for trial. Mine-owners and miners took the

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decision into their own hands and refused to work under foreign bayonets. The Ruhr occupation failed in its initial stage.

Violence demands immediate success; once stemmed or checked the game is lost. The Marne had taught that lesson. The Ruhr enforced it. Strophe and antistrophe.

But though the first result of the occupation disappointed those who had planned it, the struggle went on for month after month. Feeling on both sides became increasingly bitter. Poincaré was obstinate. So were the Westphalian miners. Their resistance was strengthened by the German Government, who supplied funds to maintain those who were out of work, and gave financial support to the companies. This was at the cost of a great strain on the finances of the Reich, and entailed a disastrous acceleration of the activity of the printing press. The German Government was landed in a currency crisis of the utmost gravity. The markets of the world were threatened; the financiers of the world became alarmed. The struggle

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had become so dangerous to the cause of Peace that forces were brought into play which had not been concerned in the initial stage. It was gradually realised by the outside world that this was not a mere question of the non-payment of a debt and of appropriate measures by a creditor to obtain payment. It was something far more serious. The action begun, if carried through, might result in a fundamental modification of the conditions of Peace. Was it not an endeavour to seek an alteration in the map of Europe and a redistribution of the military and economic forces of the Western world? Unless a solution could be found Europe would be divided permanently into two hostile camps, and the idea of general pacification would have to be abandoned.

So it came about that in the autumn of 1923, when the finances of Germany had fallen to their lowest ebb, at long last public opinion in two continents realised the danger of the course which was being pursued. So strong was the feeling that it was vain for

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France to declare that effective reparation would be obtained as a result of occupation ; that the German mines were beginning to work under French control. The political risks were so serious that the whole adventure had to be liquidated. If Europe was to have peace, there could be no alteration of the fundamental distribution of economic force established by the Treaty of Versailles.

The Ruhr occupation of 1923 was the culminating point of the Poincaré period, the period during which aggressive distrust of Germany was the animating spirit of French foreign policy.

In the early summer of 1924 Poincaré fell, and was succeeded by Herriot. Within three months the Dawes Plan was adopted, regularising temporarily the reparation problem. A year later the signature of Locarno marked a further advance on the path to Peace.

Poincaré, although still powerful, did not oppose either of these great acts of conciliation. They were indeed in striking contradiction

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to the policy which he had previously advocated and followed. He felt that the temper of the times was against him, that the degenerate voters of the day would no longer support the stern severity which he had practised. Things must take their course, dangerous as it might be. Briand was there with his silver tongue and his skill in handling men. Experience would show which policy was right. Poincaré had done his utmost to prevent France being lured by false hopes of security, based upon agreement and reconciliation.

From this time forward, both during Herriot's term of office and later, Poincaré devoted himself mainly to internal administration and finance, leaving Briand a relatively free hand in foreign affairs.

His great achievement since 1924 has been the stabilisation of the franc, a feat he accomplished in 1927 and 1928 with complete success.

1929 opens with a new problem, in which both knowledge of finance and a broad view

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of foreign policy are required. The final settlement of the reparation payments has been brought up for decision. This will necessitate agreement with Germany as to the total amount of the Reparation Debt, an agreement vainly sought by many an international conference from 1920 to 1924.

Will men be more reasonable to-day? Time will show. Two favourable factors exist. America will play a larger part than in former negotiations. Poincaré is older and said to take a milder and broader view of foreign relations than he did, desiring at the end of his career to leave a Western Europe genuinely pacified.

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ARISTIDE BRIAND

AMONG the statesmen of Europe who have played leading parts since the war, none has attained—and none deserves—a higher fame than Aristide Briand. This pre-eminent position and reputation he has achieved despite characteristics which are usually a bar to contemporary popularity. Briand is fundamentally a sceptic, but so kindly, so generous, so compassionate a sceptic that one is tempted to ask whether sympathy with the sufferings of mankind was ever manifested in clearer relief by the

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ARISTIDE BRIAND.

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professed votaries of demonstrative philanthropy. No prejudice has led to graver mistakes in the judgment of history than the erroneous belief that human kindness is denied to those with a bias towards irony and agnosticism.

In Briand's case this is pre-eminently true. The common verdict on him would be that one who smiles so critically and disbelieves so much can at best be estimable.

Some of Briand's followers lapse into excess in their admiration of him. One of them proposed that the principal rôle in *The King of Kings* belonged by right to him, on the ground that his attitude towards life was—taken broadly—less at variance with the Gospel story than that of any contemporary politician or artist. In the episode of the tribute money, of the woman taken in adultery, in the story of Mary Magdalene, and in many other occasions, Briand—in impersonating the part—would have had in no way to depart from his natural self.

Comparisons are odious, and we prefer

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not to follow the enthusiastic into exaggeration. It is enough to claim that no leading statesman of our time has shown a kindlier generosity and a broader view of life.

There is another test of his admirable qualities. No man more than he—except perhaps Stresemann—has run equal political risks for the advance of Europe towards pacification. Who has been bolder in advocating a policy of reconciliation, more prudent in refusing to be diverted from this policy by secondary issues? It is said that philosophy has no martyrs. But Briand has endured much for his conviction that Europe can be pacified. He might be deemed the St. Sebastian of pacification but for the perpetual smile and the perpetual cigarette.

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GENERAL WEYGAND

IN the last years of the war those who attended the War Conferences of the Allies were deeply impressed with the speed and precision with which decisions taken on the inspiration of Maréchal Foch were carried out. They became accustomed to the view that this punctuality of execution was largely due to the ability and zeal of an alert officer who was the constant companion and intimate confidant of the Maréchal. While the conception was that of Foch, and while it was through his energy and

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conviction that a plan was adopted, its execution was attributed in large measure to Weygand, and many think, in furtherance of victory, execution is not less important than conception.

My acquaintance with General Weygand dates from a later period—the time when serious alarm was felt lest the Soviet invasion of Poland should result in a communistic menace to the whole of Central Europe. The Polish Army had advanced rashly and precipitately into the heart of Russia. This was done against the military and political advice of the Allies, and led, as a much more celebrated invasion of Russia had led before, to the necessity of a disastrous retreat. The Polish forces in June, July, and August 1920 were driven back in disorder from Russian territory which they had occupied, and did not halt in their flight until they had passed far within their own frontiers. There was practically no resistance to the Russian advance until the spires of Warsaw were within sight of the invading Muscovite.

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LE GÉNÉRAL WEYGAND, COMMANDANT SUPRÊME DES FORCES POLONAISES.

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Urgent appeals were made by the Polish authorities for support from France and England, but it was more easy to recognise the danger than to decide how to ward it off. The Governments of Paris and London might be willing and anxious to send munitions and even to send troops. How could they be conveyed to Poland? The path across Germany was practically blocked. There were many obstacles in the route via Danzig. Goods dispatched through Czecho-Slovakia were by no means certain of arrival owing to the close relations between the Czechs and the Russians. In view of all these difficulties the English and French Governments determined to replace the physical by the moral, to send a Mission to Warsaw composed of military and civil elements, to advise as to the best means of meeting the danger and affording the support required.

It may fairly be claimed that no diplomatic military mission ever worked more harmoniously than the Anglo-French delegates who were sent in July 1920 to assist in

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defending Warsaw against the Bolshevik attack.

They were united in zeal for the defence of Poland ; there was the closest international co-operation ; only one preoccupation filled their minds, viz. to bring the Mission to a successful and victorious issue.

And in the result, no success could have been more complete. In July, when we arrived in Warsaw, there was confusion, if not consternation ; the probability that Warsaw would fall within a few weeks was in the proportion of ten to one. In August, when the Franco-English Mission withdrew, the Bolshevik attack had been shattered ; the Muscovite aggressor was routed and was retreating in disorder to the security of his own territory.

Almost all dangers which are successfully warded off are subsequently regarded by sceptics as having been imaginary or exaggerated. The danger to Europe in August 1920 belongs to this category. The menace to European civilisation which the Bolshevik

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advance constituted has been grossly underrated. The work of the Anglo-French Mission has shared a like fate.

A Polish enthusiast, if asked what occurred, would reply that the genius of Pilsudski achieved a miracle, and that the resilience and resource of the Slav nature brought off an improbability to which the Western Mission contributed little.

This view may be popular in patriotic Polish circles. I am sceptical about it myself, believing rather that the military success was due in a large measure to the sober, methodical method of Weygand in organising Polish resistance, and that the confidence inspired by the presence of a Mission, representing the vast forces of Western Europe, had a powerful influence on the morale of the defence.

If this judgment is correct, it becomes interesting to inquire what manner of man is Weygand. The reply is clear—the ideal soldier, precise, hardworking, firm in opinion yet modest, brave yet prudent, believing in-

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tensely in discipline, method, and organisation, but neither stereotyped nor deficient in resource. A man of excellent judgment both in civil no less than in military affairs, ambitious but devoted, the most faithful subordinate, the most competent leader.

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GUSTAV STRESEMANN

IT is difficult for me to give a balanced account of Stresemann. I was too close to the man, too intimate, too attached to him. During six years we were in almost daily intercourse, either in personal interview or by confidential intermediary, and I believe that no two men in similar positions were ever more frank with one another or more free in the interchange of suggestion and criticism.

A first impression of Stresemann was that he might have been Winston Churchill's

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brother. The same silhouette—almost identical colouring. And in temperament and mental characteristics a close analogy.

Both brilliant, daring, and bold. In both, more than a dash of recklessness—and a pronounced predilection for the unorthodox. Compare the views held by Stresemann on permanent officials with what Winston thinks of Colonels and Major-Generals; neither class would come off much better than the other. Minor differences of course there were. Winston's voice is soft and lisping, with a slight impediment in delivery. Stresemann's tones were resonant and clear—they have been occasionally criticised as rasping. And his mind was no less clear than his voice. No half tones; no blurred outlines.

The divergence between English and German methods of public speaking is so great that a comparison between the oratorical performances of individuals is difficult. The German normal method is formal and enunciatory; the English easy and conversational. But the real strength of Stresemann, as with

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GUSTAV STRESEMANN.
From a painting by Augustus John.

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Winston, lay less in statement than in reply —in reply he was brilliant, and equipped with a complete command of the weapons of sarcasm.

Turning from oratory to the less external side of Stresemann's gifts, one finds qualities which were equally remarkable. The most hostile critic cannot deny consistency and courage. Whether his policy was right or wrong, it was pursued unrelentingly and without deviation from 1923 until his death in October 1929. There was also a certain element of good luck, without which, in troublous times, no statesman can come through.

It may sound paradoxical but, in considering the character of Stresemann, I have been impressed with his resemblance to certain types in Greek life. There was in him a definite note of freedom from superstition and a very marked directness based upon complete incapacity for self-deception. Moreover, the humanist bias was with him in all that he undertook. He valued life for

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what it was, not for what it might be thought; he valued achievement because it gave him power, and gave him the consideration of his contemporaries. If he idealised, it was the idealism of common things. If it be true that the Greek felt and expressed extraordinarily keen pleasure in eating and drinking and in the enjoyment of life, then Stresemann was Greek. In the capacity to appreciate simple pleasures, no one could excel him; he would have sympathised with the character in Greek comedy who boasted that he drank from the pitcher when the cup had been broken by a slave.

It was not only in the frank enjoyment of things that Stresemann came near to the Greek type, but also in the clearness of his vision—I had almost said in his intolerance of cant and humbug; vague imaginings never blurred his conceptions of life.

My real friendship with Stresemann began in 1921. I had met him before, but we had only exchanged commonplace civilities. In one of the numerous crises which occurred

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between Berlin and the Western capitals during the years following Versailles, Stresemann—representing at that time an important Parliamentary group—came to the British Embassy with four questions which he wanted answered. These questions were so pungent and precise that I was totally unable to answer them myself, and, indeed, when I promised to telegraph to London to ascertain the views of the British Government, I anticipated receiving from official sources either an evasive reply or a reminder that it was hardly consistent with diplomatic usage to transmit definite points of such a searching nature. It happened, however, that Curzon, who was then at the head of the Foreign Office, was no less ready with pen and tongue than Stresemann, and no less disinclined than he to seek safety in silence or evasion. So the answer came to these four questions, and from that date Stresemann and I became close friends. Once reassured as to the essential good faith of English policy; once convinced that we were not seeking to hold

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Germany down in a subordinate position, but to procure Peace in Europe on a durable basis, his whole attitude became one of cordial co-operation. It was part of his frank, buoyant nature to put his entire case forward, to explain his own difficulties, and to relate, without reticence or reserve, the origin of his doubts and hesitation—when, indeed, doubts crossed his mind, for the occasions were rare when he hesitated about anything.

Perhaps the gravest decision which Stresemann ever had to take was in the autumn of 1923, when it fell to him to abandon the campaign of Passive Resistance with which Germany countered the French occupation of the Ruhr. There was no question about it ; Passive Resistance had to be abandoned ; it was not the will to resist which had changed, but the possibility of continuing subventions. The paper money with which the German Government had assisted the miners from January 11, 1923, up to September of that year, had fallen in value to such an extent that

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it was no longer of any effective use ; Germany must therefore submit. The question was whether submission would obtain for her alleviation of the intolerable condition of affairs which menaced her whole industrial life. Stresemann, who was then Chancellor, took the decision—took it unwillingly, hoping for the best. The best did not accrue ; there was no alleviation ; Poincaré remained adamant, the entire control of the Ruhr industry continued in French hands. Disappointment in Germany was so intense that the Government fell ; Stresemann ceased to be Chancellor, but remained in office as Foreign Minister, and was still the most influential member of the Government.

In spite of his failure to obtain concessions from Poincaré, Stresemann was constant to the policy of a settlement between Germany and France if reasonable terms could be obtained, but he would not negotiate with France alone : England must be a party to every negotiation ; on no account would he sacrifice the English connection.

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Regarding the Rhineland and the Palatinate, Stresemann was persistent in declaring that Germany was ready to renounce any idea of using these districts for military purposes, either in Peace or War—provided that a similar obligation was undertaken by France.

I remember a conversation with Stresemann in March 1924, showing the superstitious side of his character. He said to me: "Are people in England anxious about the possibility of another war?" When I replied in the negative, he said: "I will tell you a curious incident. X of the Deutsche Bank—quite a serious man—told me the other day that he had just seen two officer friends of his who had been to a gipsy fortune-teller. They asked her what the future held in store for them. She said, 'In 1927 you will return to the Army to fight in another war.' They replied, 'We have had one war, and that is enough for a lifetime.' The gipsy rejoined: 'It is just as certain there will be another war and that you will fight in it as it is that the child of

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one of you is now dead.' The officers returned to their hotel, and one of them found a telegram from Munich saying that his child had been run over by an automobile and killed."

Early in 1925, when the Pact of Peace first came into practical negotiation, Stresemann's apprehension was that it might be less desirable to come to an agreement with Herriot (who was then French Premier) than with Briand or Loucheur. The former, as a Radical Socialist, would meet with more opposition from the Right. He said : " It is an analogous case to that of Germany where, with the Nationalist members that I have at last succeeded in getting into the Government, I am able to come to a fair arrangement with the Allies ; better than the Socialists could have done. No one believed that my object in bringing in Nationalist members was to be conciliatory ; now they see that what I said was true, and that I can afford to be more conciliatory than the Socialists, with whom the French continue to intrigue against me."

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Stresemann never had any doubt that Germany would endeavour to carry out the Dawes Report. He had great belief in the importance of American financial support, and received, not without a certain deference, financial counsel from American experts. It may be said that the permanent trend of his policy was definitely Western as opposed to the East. It might indeed be foolish for Germany to sacrifice the Moscow connection, unless something solid and permanent could be obtained in the West. But if wise men once came from the East—rich men, with gold to loan, now hailed from another quarter.

Also, as to Poland, it is doubtful whether he believed much in the possibility of any arrangement. The policy of France might be to trust to the Polish alliance. But for Germany to support Poland would mean the inevitable hostility of Russia, and Russia was bound to come back. Undue partiality for Poland had been the underlying cause of Napoleon's catastrophe ; his support of Polish aspirations

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in the years succeeding Tilsit was the ultimate reason of the Russian hostility which led to his downfall. Similar arguments applied to-day: neither Russia, under present auspices, nor Poland, at any time, was to be relied upon as an ally of Germany.

These reflections apply to Stresemann's policy in the years 1925–6. Whether he retained the same ideas in later years, whether he would have retained them permanently, may be doubtful. His was a most lively and progressive mind; there was no cast-iron immobility, but a great power of adaptation to the necessities imposed by changing circumstances.

A striking instance of his facility of apprehension may be cited.

It so happened, in the months preceding Locarno, that Augustus John was staying at the British Embassy, and had made sketches of several prominent persons in Berlin. He had particularly desired to do a portrait of Stresemann, being impressed by the vivacity

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of his expression and the energy of his personality. The Foreign Minister willingly fell in with this plan, and I arranged that he should sit to Augustus John. When the portrait was well under way, the thought struck me that the sittings might be a favourable opportunity to discuss with Stresemann the larger possibilities adumbrated in the German Notes of January 20 and February 10.

Augustus John knew no German, so the conversations could be carried on between Stresemann and myself as if we were alone. The advantage of the occasion as compared with an ordinary interview with the Foreign Minister resided in the fact that for the purpose of the portrait he was compelled to maintain immobility and comparative silence, whereas the usual tenor of other interviews with him was that I had difficulty in giving adequate development to my thoughts—his lively intelligence and extreme facility of diction inclining him to affect monologue rather than interchange of ideas. When sitting for his portrait, however much he

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might desire to hold forth, artistic considerations would keep him immobile, silent, and possibly attentive.

Things fell out according to plan. After a sentence or two on the subject of international conciliation, Stresemann naturally wished to interject considerations of his own, considerations which, developed without restraint, would have been neither consenting nor concise. But Augustus John protested and imposed artistic authority; I was therefore able to labour on with my own views without interruption.

Being by nature a poor expositor, and having only a limited command of technical German phrases, the assistance given by the inhibitive gag of the artist was of extreme value. Without Augustus John, armed with his palette and his paint-brushes, the chances of profitable interchange of thought would have been considerably diminished. Reduced to abnormal silence in the manner indicated, Stresemann's quickness of apprehension was such that he rapidly seized and assimilated

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the further developments to which the Pact proposals might lead.

Of the qualities shown in the negotiations which followed, the most remarkable was perhaps physical courage. At any time during 1925 the chances of assassination to which Stresemann exposed himself were such that no prudent Insurance Company would have assumed the risk of a life policy.

It is impossible to review the years from 1920 to 1925—that is to say, the years which led from post-war animosity to the relatively peaceful haven of Locarno—without endeavouring to determine which of the statesmen of Europe deserves the highest mead of praise for what was achieved. As readers of this volume know, I have the highest opinion of Briand and of his services to the cause of Peace, but if one estimates the value of a contribution by the amount of difference it would have made had that particular contribution not been available, Stresemann is perhaps entitled to the highest place. He assumed bigger risks in carrying

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out his policy ; he was more peculiarly fitted to influence public opinion in his own country than was either Briand in France or Chamberlain in England. And this for a simple reason : by temperament and by historical antecedents he belonged to the other side. If contrary to expectation he stood to-day for Peace, there must be reasons of exceptional cogency.

Stresemann began life as a pugnacious student of the full-blooded type, a militant and aggressive Nationalist. During the war he was an advocate of the strongest and most bellicose measures ; an opponent of any pledge to restore Belgium, an advocate of submarine warfare, and a bitter critic of all negotiations which would, in his opinion, lead to premature Peace. This past gave him a position with the Nationalists (the party from whom opposition to the Peace policy was most to be feared) of an exceptional character. They might detest the measures he proposed ; they might consider his concessions dishonourable and dangerous, but

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they could not attack him with the same vehemence with which they would have attacked similar measures introduced by a Socialist or Catholic minister. His general orientation had been similar to theirs ; he had not recanted in principle ; he could only be a convert to measures of conciliation from imperative motives of expediency.

Stresemann's relations with his former friends of the Right and Right Centre were peculiar and fluctuating. At times he co-operated with them ; at times they were his most vehement opponents. While in sympathy with them in being a partisan of the Hohenzollerns, he diverged from them in his readiness to adopt measures he considered politically necessary. Stresemann, in pursuit of his policy, was prepared to co-operate with any party, either with the Nationalists on the one side or the Socialists on the other ; he found no consistent support from either ; he did not find support even in his own party—the Volkspartei—itself divided into several sections and subsections. So, to gain the

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necessary majorities for carrying measures that he considered essential, he had to get together casual—almost fortuitous—majorities, enlisted wherever he could find them.

What was his essential policy? To bring about such a moderation of hostility between France and Germany as would permit European pacification. So long as the acute fear of German attack existed in France, so long as Germany was under the menace of armed intervention from France and threatened by a repetition of the Ruhr invasion, any broad policy of European pacification was impossible. Once public opinion in Germany and France was reassured as to the particular danger arising from the other side of the Rhine, everything became easier. There was no more definite objective in Stresemann's mind than the above. The first step was all that he visualised clearly; once that step was taken international politics would settle down and many other things might become possible.

It is called the triumph of Stresemann's

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career that he achieved not only Locarno, but the revision of the Dawes Plan at The Hague. I have always thought Locarno incomparably the more important of the two. Indeed, I have doubted the wisdom of bringing about the revision of Dawes at so early a date, and my doubt has not been removed by the fact that the disputes consequent upon the Young Agreement undoubtedly precipitated the death of Stresemann. What financial benefit can be compared with the loss to Germany and to Europe of such a man? As to the merit of Locarno, that appears to be incontestable. In 1925, in the course of a few weeks the European barometer passed from "Storm" to "Fair," and while it has since fluctuated at times, it has never receded to the menacing level which was normal up to 1925.

The last years of Stresemann's life were marred by ill-health—ill-health largely brought about by overwork in the interest of his country and in the interest of Peace. He would, indeed, have broken down many

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months before the final catastrophe but for his indomitable will and intense nervous vitality. He was, moreover, unusually fortunate in his family life : two sons in the early twenties, both of them good-looking, intelligent, and artistic—one of them something of a musical genius ; his wife, one of the most charming members of Berlin society, looking as young as her sons, and maintaining in the family circle an atmosphere of cheerfulness which made the home both stimulating and refreshing. If Stresemann was older than the other three members of the group, he enjoyed life as much as the youngest of them. He relished his own talents, his incisive resonance, his unique capacity for clear thought and clear expression ; he was proud to be German, prouder still to be the compatriot of Goethe. Admirably versed in German literature, he could quote with verbal accuracy long passages both of poetry and prose. Indeed, he went beyond the limits of his own language, for he could quote Shakespeare, in German and in English.

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In addition to literature, he had an intense appreciation of the good things of life ; good wine, good music, were relished to the full ; his capacity for enjoyment was not marred by any hesitation or doubt as to whether the course he happened to be pursuing was right. It was always right—always inevitable. He once said that he never regretted anything he had done—his only regret was for the opportunities of enjoyment which he had foregone or missed. Above all, he enjoyed the success of his own policy, and was rightly proud of the services he had rendered to his country and the high personal position he had attained.

While Stresemann's achievements finally won general approval, it was long before he gained public confidence. Indeed, he was of those for whom it is easier to inspire admiration than to create trust. His capacity for arousing animosity was quite exceptional. Why, it is difficult to say. Perhaps his mind was too rapid to give an impression of solidity —his enunciation too resonant and the

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phrases too brilliant to suggest reflection or measure.

Of him it may be said, not that he had the qualities of his defects, but that his qualities—clearness, rapidity, and decision—earned him a reputation for defects from which he was entirely free—recklessness and lack of conviction. With the latter weakness he certainly could not be charged, for he adhered steadfastly to beliefs, when they were not only inconvenient, but damaging.

Comparing Stresemann with other German statesmen of the last half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, it should be remembered that Bismarck and Bülow had at their disposal military force and military prestige. With Stresemann these conditions, no less than high rank and social status, were completely lacking. In measuring his achievement, such fundamental differences in basic conditions must be kept in mind. Stresemann may claim to have raised Germany from the position of a stricken and disarmed foe into that of a diplomatic equal,

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entitled to full consideration as a great Power, and enjoying international guarantee for the protection of her frontiers. To have accomplished this in a few years of power without the support of armed force is a feat worthy of those who have written their names most memorably on the scroll of fame. Stresemann left Germany infinitely stronger than when he took the helm in 1923, and Europe incomparably more peaceful. This achievement is the more remarkable in that Stresemann was not, by temperament, a pacifist; it might indeed be said that pacific results of such magnitude were never before attained by so bellicose a champion.

As one who knew him well through difficult years, who saw him triumph over grave opposition from without and from within, I hold that Germany has never had a wiser or a more courageous adviser.

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CARL VON SCHUBERT

ONE is unaccustomed to associate exceptional wisdom or philosophic depth with a heavy cavalry physique; it comes, therefore, as a surprise when the two are found in combination. And yet there is little historical foundation for underrating the ability of this particular type of manly build. Bismarck was structurally the Cuirassier: Tiberius and Vespasian appear from contemporary portraits to have been built like heavy dragoons. It may be uncertain whether Carl von Schubert will attain

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in history the plane of renown of these historical personages, but he is of the same physical type, combining ponderous shoulders with the traditional cavalry walk. And he has the political sagacity of an old Roman.

The force of his intelligence is not apparent at first sight. Rather a stiff manner, no special verbal felicity—shrewd rather than quick; a deliberateness which creates the impression of a mind slow to grasp new ideas. But the true explanation is not that he understands more slowly than others, but that he is resolved to understand better. This is the essential characteristic: a desire to grasp thoroughly, to explore in every aspect—to master every detail before committing himself to a reply. Essentially German, but German in the best sense. So far does Schubert push caution that his habit is to decline to answer verbally, saying: "If you will allow me, I will send you a short memorandum to-morrow, giving my provisional reply."

And on the morrow the memorandum

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always comes : it is never short—it is generally earnest and exhaustive—the line adopted clear and definite. It is certainly not provisional, for there is rarely any subsequent change.

Admittedly such an attitude would not be appreciated in a Paris salon ; nor does it inspire admiration amongst the superficial and frivolous ; but applied to serious affairs of State it promotes in the highest degree the transaction of business, and the establishment of confidence between nations.

There is a prevalent misconception—dating from war propaganda—that Germans in general, and the German Government in particular, are exceptionally unreliable—that they are more than usually apt to break their word. It may be that since the Great War the European standard in this respect has been lowered. A new form of diversion devised by the Soviets of breaking engagements in pure malice may have led us to expect less. Possibly Germany has improved. To-day she certainly stands high in her reputation for reliability.

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German negotiators may be, and perhaps are, difficult to deal with, slow to be persuaded, pernickety, and disposed to quibble on small points, over-careful, making an infinity of reserves and precise pre-conditions on conjunctures and developments which, in all human probability, will not arise. But once they sign an engagement, their written signature is good, as is also their spoken word. Such is my experience of the statesmen and the officials with whom I have had to deal, and I take pleasure in bearing testimony.

But to return to Schubert. It is difficult, in the case of permanent officials, to disentangle what is due to their own initiative from what is executed by them on the initiative of others. But the view in Berlin of those best able to judge is that if European pacification has made such considerable progress, it is in large measure due to the sagacity and moderation of the German Secretary of State.

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K. JOSEPH WIRTH

WIRTH is a typical descendant of the Germanic tribes, and a fine specimen. The first impression made is essentially "outdoor." Nothing petty or snarling—nothing even of the bureaucrat or the pedant; large limbs, large gestures, and a breeziness like wind through the pine trees.

To place him in appropriate surroundings you imagine him striding along, bareheaded, with a great dog at his heels, drinking in the beauty of nature, and enjoying the strength of his own muscles. A second look, and a

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different impression follows very clearly. He has escaped from a class-room, and is glad to have escaped into the open air. But it has left its imprint, and your only doubt is whether he was in the class-room as teacher or pupil.

Critics might quarrel with the epithet " boyish " when applied to Wirth. But the appearance is there for those who have eyes to see, and the reality imparts charm, strength, resource—together with the power both to influence and to inspire others. Without his ingenuous frankness, Wirth would be Samson shorn of his locks, an easy prey to Philistines even without the connivance of a Delilah. With it he is one of the foremost men of his time—a man on whom patriotic hopes will continue to centre.

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GENERAL VON SEECKT

WHEN Haldane returned from his mission to Berlin in 1913, he is reported to have said that the German Generals he had met made the impression of rather nice old gentlemen, very unrelenting in asserting their own views, perhaps rather ruthless, but not otherwise than kindly.

In my view this description only applies to a small number—Hindenburg, Hoffmann, and von Kluck. There is another class of much harder material—the Ludendorffs and von Seeckts. Obviously there are other

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types and further subdivisions. Ludendorff I have never met, but it is clear that he is not a kindly old gentleman.

Von Seeckt is more interesting. He made a dignified appearance at Spa, under most difficult circumstances. At first sight rather dry and emaciated, almost too spare and hard and fit. But for the single eyeglass so much affected by the officers of the old German Army, he might suggest Julius Cæsar. On closer acquaintance the dried-up effect disappears, and only fitness and efficiency survive.

Intense devotion to his profession, absolute loyalty to his chiefs and to the State. When the Hitler *putsch* took place at Munich in 1922 it was the steadfastness of von Seeckt that saved the country from serious trouble, both through his fealty to the Republic and the soldiers' loyalty to him. When asked whether the Army would support a "putsch," his answer was: "They will follow me." And to those who knew von Seeckt, that was enough.

A broader mind than is expected in so tight

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GENERAL VON SEECKT.

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a uniform, a wider outlook than seems appropriate to so precise, so correct, so neat an exterior.

During the war he had experience with all the allies of Germany. Two years with the Austrian Army, one year with the Bulgarians, and one with the Turks. In his judgment the Turks were much the best. Somewhat exacting in the way of food and money, they fought well.

As regards the present German Army, von Seeckt has always held that it is too small for the work it has to do, but he claims that it is efficient and well in hand. The officers have been chosen by himself with the utmost care, solely for military merit and without regard to political influence. That is his claim, and he makes it with all sincerity, notwithstanding the fact that ninety per cent. of the officers are monarchical. With regard to the danger of " putsches " either from the Right or from the Left, von Seeckt has never been an alarmist. The event has proved him right. He was not only prescient; he did

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much to bring about the result he foretold, thus not only assisting his reputation as a prophet, but rendering notable service to the Republic.

At one time von Seeckt could claim that he had kept studiously clear of politics, but in later years there have been indications that the lure of an active political career is likely to overcome his former aversion from everything not strictly military.

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AGO VON MALTZAN

POSSIBLY the cleverest man who has worked in the Wilhelmstrasse since the war. In diplomacy and politics a pupil of Kiderlen-Waechter, who in his turn was a pupil of Bismarck, and probably one of the soundest advisers that Germany has had. In physical appearance Maltzan was unlike his teacher, and not at all in the Bismarckian tradition: no rough manners, no big dog as a constant companion, neither beer on the table nor the historic concoction of Burgundy strapped with brandy. Maltzan was more

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the hussar than the cuirassier. No aroma of the forest nor of the Mecklenburg ancestry which was his. Something Oriental: in appearance engaging rather than impressive; mentally his characteristics seemed to have come from the Far East and to have gathered on the way a veneer from each country traversed. As a basis—detachment, century-old philosophy—Confucian indifference to contemporary standards; an imaginative element from the wide plains of Siberia; Russian agility of mind; Polish grace of manner.

Add to this the post-Bismarckian training, and you have a formidable array of qualities like to be effective in the diplomatic world of the 1920's. And effective they were. A clear and definite view of policy, founded on the old conception that friendship with Russia was indispensable even if expensive, strengthened by a certain personal sympathy with the Soviets—partly because they were so unreliable—partly because they fitted into the tradition. Maltzan's acute mind was of that curious

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type which prefers trickiness in others to reliability, and ends almost fatally by surrounding itself with the least reliable elements within reach. There are examples of this in all countries.

Maltzan was fundamentally trustworthy, but did not give the impression of trustworthiness; he was too agile and clever. And when he spoke the truth, as he usually did, it was so contrary to expectation that a mental effort was required to believe. He continually behaved better than expected. One thought: next time I will not be so foolishly suspicious. But when the next time came it was the same old story.

Personally I had a great liking for Maltzan and a sincere admiration for his talents. At the same time it is fortunate that he left Berlin in 1923 to become Ambassador at Washington. He would not have been in key with Stresemann. Had he remained as Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, there would have been no Locarno. He was too wedded to the Russian connection. His

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whole bias was to sacrifice everything to relations with Russia, which meant a certain deference to Russian desires, and Russia desired nothing less than an assured peace in the West.

After a few years of successful work at Washington Maltzan was killed in an aeroplane crash while on leave in Germany. All who had transacted business with him agreed that the Wilhelmstrasse thus lost its most supple and alert intelligence.

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HUGO STINNES

IN writing of Stinnes I depart from my general rule only to give sketches of those for whom I feel a special admiration. I cannot pretend that I felt either admiration or sympathy for Stinnes. He appeared to me overbearing, wrong-headed, and inclined to insolence. Impossible to discuss with him—for discussion degenerated into a reiteration by him of positive opinion in an aggressive form.

As regards the importance of his rôle—that was no doubt considerable. Together

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with Helfferich he represented the extreme of resistance to the policy of conciliation; they were the determined opponents of any reasonable settlement.

In one as deeply engaged in finance as Stinnes, it is vain to endeavour to isolate the patriotic interest from the personal. Such a man, even if inspired by the finest patriotism, must incline to favour the course which suits his book. He is unlikely to consider it a patriotic duty to lose money.

Stinnes was like no one in my recollection so much as Harriman, the American Railway King, and I can best give an impression of the German financier by describing the American, whom I saw more closely. Both had the same bedraggled, untidy look as of a rough-haired terrier just come out of one scrap and in search of another; nothing Olympian or serene.

It happened that just after the 1908 crisis in the American market I was in New York, and found myself practically living with Harriman, having most of my meals with

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HERR HUGO STINNES.

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him, and spending evenings in his house. Why he was so friendly, and why I became so intimate, passes comprehension, for we had no business connection. But I had letters of introduction from Messrs. Baring, and we hit it off at once. What a life he led. Enormously rich at the time, he never had a moment's peace. Fighting constantly, first with opponents, then with colleagues, then with politicians, surrounded by lawyers—there appeared to be four or five every night in his house—and every night action had to be taken to defend suits in nearly every State in the Union. No constitution, no digestion, nothing allowed by doctors other than food for dyspeptics served on a tray. To lead his harassed life would mean nervous collapse in three days to any normal individual.

Too much can be paid for most things. Nothing is so constantly overpaid as wealth. Harriman enjoyed money because it gave power, enjoyed it almost as much as he enjoyed fighting—perhaps as much as he enjoyed getting the best of a deal. These

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were his main delights—there was not much else.

And Stinnes was, according to many accounts, not unlike. He had the same fighting, domineering, "get-the-better-of-you" spirit. Americans who knew him well, and who felt a certain affinity with him, have told me that he was nearer their idea of genius than anyone in Germany. Personally I failed to see it. Stinnes was bitter in defeat—much more so than most Germans, and he took his country's reverses as much to heart as his own. This prejudiced him against anyone representing an ex-enemy country.

Then he was a determined inflationist, either from conviction or interest, and that did not help us to make friends. He was persistently against conciliation, except on impossible terms.

As I have said elsewhere, stabilisation came to Germany over four dead bodies. These men had to disappear before a policy of stabilisation could be brought through. They were Rathenau, Havenstein, Helfferich, and

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Stinnes: the gravest obstacle to currency reform was Stinnes—the most powerful, the most vehement.

Rathenau was assassinated in June 1922, Havenstein died in November 1923, Helfferich was killed in a railway accident in April 1924, and Stinnes died from an operation in the same month.

There were several strange circumstances connected with the establishment of stabilisation in Germany. First, the death-roll already recounted. Secondly, the astonishing paradox that Helfferich, just before he was killed, was the inventor of the device which enabled others to carry through the stabilisation he had so long opposed. Thirdly, that Poincaré had to fall from power before stabilisation could become a fact in Germany, the same Poincaré who three years later carried through stabilisation with marked success in France.

Had Stinnes lived, I doubt if German finance would have recovered in 1924. There would have been no Locarno.

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WALTER RATHENAU

RATHENAU was once described as a prophet in a tail-coat, and the description conveys something of the theoretical outlook which he professed, together with the polish and slightly theatrical brilliancy of a modern Sidonia. With less taste he was termed "Le Christ en frac." Above all, he possessed fascination, and impressed contemporaries with his undeniable superiority. I shall never forget the enthusiasm with which Wirth, then Chancellor, announced to me that he had persuaded Rathenau to

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accept the post of Foreign Minister. He said, almost textually, "Do not let us discuss current affairs to-day. There is a great, a most important event: Rathenau has joined the Ministry."

In the result, the benefit to Germany and the world of this combination was less great than Wirth, with his boyish enthusiasm, anticipated. Rathenau was assassinated a few months later, and the Ministry fell without solving any of the major problems before the country.

Fortune was malevolent in this, if not misguided, for the Wirth-Rathenau combination had possibilities of great achievement. Rathenau enjoyed immense prestige abroad; he was regarded, perhaps, as rather demoniacal than saintly; but he was eloquent in three languages, he was subtle. There was no Teutonic obstinacy or dourness about him: if he assented, it was with grace; if he differed, it was with urbanity. His arguments were ingenious, even when unsound, and it was easier to feel that his conclusions

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were wrong than to confute them. It might have been said of him as of Mephistopheles—

> " Er ist nicht hässlich, er ist nicht lahm,
> Er ist ein lieber charmanter Mann."

But, again like Mephistopheles, he had one dominant weakness, an egregious vanity—a determination, if he could not rule in heaven, to shine on earth.

The story of the Genoa Conference and of the Treaty of Rapallo has often been told. But it has not been told correctly. The inner workings, which inspired events, have remained unknown. In last analysis, it was a conflict of three vanities—Lloyd George, Rathenau, and Poincaré. The last-named was determined the Conference should not succeed—that Lloyd George should not attain his purpose of conciliating Germany, of bringing Russia into the European conclave. Lloyd George was sincere in his belief in Russian possibilities, and, rightly or wrongly, was prepared to make sacrifices to obtain Russian co-operation. He might

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have found in Rathenau an ardent convert to this policy, and the two in combination might have carried the day—and altered history for better or worse. But personal susceptibility came in. Lloyd George had met Poincaré a few weeks before at Boulogne. Lloyd George had been conciliatory. Poincaré had been truculent. Commenting on this matter in the Reichstag, Rathenau had said that Lloyd George had been defeated by Poincaré. This was not true; had it been ten times true, it would have been a grave blunder on the eve of Genoa to say it. Naturally, the speech came to Lloyd George's knowledge, and he resented it—resented it all the more that he had been in friendly touch with Rathenau. When the two arrived at Genoa, Lloyd George avoided giving Rathenau an interview, even if he did not refuse to receive him.

Rathenau's vanity was wounded, his suspicions were aroused. If he was not received by Lloyd George, it must be that deep plots were being hatched between the

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Allies and the Russians; Germany would be isolated; Rathenau would appear ridiculous, and return to Berlin as a German delegate who had been neglected, outwitted, and befooled. The Russians, with their accustomed skill, played on these feelings. The precise incidents which led up to the signature of the German delegates to the Rapallo Treaty are worth recording.

The eve of the actual day on which the Rapallo Treaty was signed an extraordinary series of contretemps occurred. Meetings were missed, telephone messages went wrong. The Germans telephoned to the English, and were told somewhat curtly that they were out for the day. This was understood to mean that they did not wish to be disturbed. On the other hand, the Italians had intended to invite Wirth and Rathenau to meet Lloyd George, but when they telephoned, Rathenau had already left his hotel for Rapallo. Wirth would not go to the proposed meeting without Rathenau; this was interpreted as deliberate

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abstention on the part of the German Delegation.

Some time after midnight—in the early hours of April 16—Tchitcherin telephoned to the Germans asking them to meet him in Rapallo in order to discuss the possibility of coming to terms ; the message was received by Maltzan, who at once proceeded to Rathenau's bedroom, where he found him pacing up and down in mauve pyjamas, with haggard look, and eyes staring out of his head. When Maltzan came in, he said, " I suppose you bring me a death warrant ? " Maltzan replied : " No, news of quite a different character." When he transmitted the message to Rathenau, the latter said : " Now that I realise the true situation, I will go to Lloyd George and tell him the whole position, and come to terms with him." Maltzan replied : " That would be quite dishonourable. If you do that I will at once resign my post as Secretary of State and retire into private life. It would be behaving monstrously to Tchitcherin, and I can be

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no party to such action." After an animated wrangle between Rathenau and Maltzan, it was decided that the German Delegation should accept the Russian invitation and proceed to Rapallo. This they did the following morning, but agreement was not come to easily, as both sides were suspicious : at first the Russians held out for extravagant terms, but they weakened when they learned, through an overheard telephone conversation, that the Germans were still in touch with Lloyd George. Finally, in the afternoon, agreement was come to, and the document was signed, both sides having been lured to signature by an erroneous conception of what was going on. Rathenau and the rest of the German delegates were in fact stampeded.

The Treaty of Rapallo was not well received in Berlin, the general opinion being that the mode and the moment of signature were open to much criticism. The fact of a separate contract with the Bolsheviks displeased many influential circles. It is indeed certain that

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Rathenau—already misunderstood and openly criticised by a large section of the public—became increasingly unpopular on account of the Treaty of Rapallo.

Two months later, he met his death at the hands of murderers. During these two months he was fully aware of the bitter hatred which he inspired. Time and again he is known to have said that he was sure to be assassinated; yet, when urged to accept police protection, he declined. He was too proud to tolerate any outward indication of apprehension, too self-willed and confident to modify his attitude or abate one jot from the theoretical beliefs to which he had declared his allegiance. His demeanour in the presence of known danger was indeed fatalistic. He acted as though convinced that nothing could alter the preordained decrees of Providence. Appointed events would happen. As for himself, he would not change, be the consequences what they might.

Nothing could be more horrible than the details of the murder to which he finally fell

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a victim. It was in the last degree deliberate, cold-blooded, and brutal. After a night spent partly in political discussion at the American Embassy, partly in private conference with his bitter antagonist, Stinnes, Rathenau drove home to his house in the Grünewald. He did not arrive there until four in the morning, and was due to return to the Ministry at ten. He started shortly before this hour in an open car. As he emerged from the grounds of his villa, a powerful automobile, which had been waiting outside, followed closely behind him. A few hundred yards farther on there was a cross-road. A second car—containing confederates of the assassins—emerged from this cross-road and deliberately blocked the path. Rathenau's driver had to stop suddenly to avoid a collision. While he was expostulating with those who blocked the way, the car from behind came alongside, and two assassins opened fire on Rathenau at close range with heavy revolvers. Their shots took deadly effect, but, as though to leave no

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possible doubt, they threw a bomb which, bursting, nearly cut him in two. Rathenau must have expired immediately.

What posterity will think of Rathenau's philosophical and economic writings is still uncertain. It was an unusual phenomenon to see a young and elegant millionaire launching out in the field of speculative thought, with complete command of the weapons of controversy. Although for the general public the style was too obscure, the matter too difficult, they took him on trust as a meteoric genius, and they were probably right.

There is a floating suspicion in many minds that he was not very sound, but this impression, in my case at least, is based on two inadequate grounds: first, that he was abnormally brilliant; secondly, that on two quite minor subjects of theoretical controversy—currency and trade balance—he held theories opposed to my own, and these two subjects happen to be among those about which I am less sure than usual that I know nothing.

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PILSUDSKI

BORN in Zulow, Lithuania, some sixty years ago, Pilsudski has a greater experience of revolutionary intrigue, of terrorist methods, of Russian prisons, and of wild, irregular warfare than anyone past or present. His father was a man of good birth ; something of an experimental enthusiast in agricultural production, and, like most enthusiasts, not conspicuously successful as regards cash balances. His mother, an ardent Polish patriot, taught her children to place love of country before every worldly interest, and to despise suffering and

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even death if national service could be rendered. So devoted is Pilsudski to her memory that he is fond of asserting that, in every difficult crisis, he is guided by the following reflection: "What would my mother have wished me to do, placed as I am?" This determined, his course is always clear; and success crowns decision with unusual consistency.

Dominated as he was by such patriotic inspiration, it is not surprising that the Russian police arrested Pilsudski directly they traced to the district where he lived the plot which led to the Emperor Alexander's assassination. There was no clear evidence of his personal complicity—he was indeed innocent of direct participation—but, with secret plotting about, the authorities held that Pilsudski could not be wholly unconnected. In such matters, Russian tribunals are no sticklers for legal proof, and Pilsudski was relegated to Siberia for seven years. The sentence, if unjust, served to strengthen and confirm his character. The road to

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Siberia was long and dreary. The convoy of prisoners took six months to reach Irkutsk, and there were still a thousand kilometres to traverse before Pilsudski arrived at his final destination on the Lena. The poorest food, weary leagues of tramping through snow, nights in damp, unhealthy sheds were a severe trial to Pilsudski's health. But if the body was weak, the spirit was unsubdued. While the convoy was at Irkutsk a mutiny broke out among the Poles. The Governor ordered soldiers to flog the prisoners, but Pilsudski threw himself in front of his comrades. The result was a heavy blow on the head from the butt-end of a rifle, which laid him bleeding and senseless to the ground.

This episode convinced him that, against the Moscovite giant, other qualities were required than physical courage. He determined to co-operate with extreme Socialists in organising revolution, and was ready to risk all rather than submit to Russian tyranny. The mutiny at Irkutsk ended Pilsudski's youth. Siberia meant isolation with ample

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opportunity for brooding and study. Pilsudski brooded and studied. He returned to Poland a convinced and incurable revolutionary; hatred of Russian tyranny had burnt into his soul—patriotism had fused into passion—belief in his own destiny hardened into a bitter contempt for the judgment and counsel of others.

After liberation from Siberia he led for five years the hunted existence of a revolutionary journalist. The violence of his hatred for Russia, his enthusiasm for the cause of Polish independence, his past sufferings, and above all, the startling appearance of this black-bearded, haggard orator with glowering eyes and close-cropped hair, roused the enthusiasm of hearers, and gave them confidence in one whose whole bearing was the negation of compromise.[1]

Hectic journalism was varied by long terms of imprisonment—terms which would have been longer but for desperate escapes,

[1] Summarised from *Pilsudski—the Hero of Poland*, by Rom Landau.

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sometimes facilitated by simulated madness. Funds had to be provided for livelihood, still more for propaganda. These were sought and found by various means, and there was no limit to the audacity of the stratagems to which Pilsudski had recourse.

One especially desperate venture was brought off by means of an assault on the mail van of an express train, on which occasion a sum of no less than three million roubles was captured. On another occasion the Governor of the Gaol of Warsaw received orders from the Chief of the Police to deliver ten of his most important Polish prisoners to a police escort. A certain Captain von Budberg led the escort. He was a type of swaggering, high-handed officer from the Baltic provinces. The prison governor did not dare refuse his demand. The prisoners were led out and packed into a special prison van. The next day the Warsaw public learned that the driver had been chloroformed soon after the van left the prison: Captain von Budberg was an

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emissary of Pilsudski—the order of release was a forgery.

Pilsudski was, and still is, a pronounced sceptic about orthodox methods, whether applied to politics or military affairs; he loves danger, his pulse only beating at a normal rate when he is in imminent personal peril—at other times only forty to the minute. In personal appearance so striking as to be almost theatrical. None of the usual amenities of civilised intercourse, but all the apparatus of sombre genius. He claims that, in actual warfare, his methods, though unusual and not in conformity with textbook practice, have invariably proved successful.

A word must be added regarding the Polish Legionaries, but it would be vain to endeavour to initiate the reader into the war history of this strangely volatile force organised and led by Pilsudski. They fought first of all on the side of the Austrian Army; then negotiated with the Germans; while finally some of them became incorporated in the

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Russian force. There was no treachery to Poland in these changes of front. The Legionary never professed faith in any but the Polish cause ; assistance was given to the side which promised at the moment greatest advantage to Poland.

Pilsudski's popularity with this force was due in large measure to the vigorous self-discipline he imposed upon himself. He would sleep among the humblest soldiers on rough floors of peasant houses. His food was of the coarsest. As a rule he did not notice what was set before him, devouring it with nervous haste. Unlimited tea and cigarettes made up for all deficiencies.

Since the end of the World War, Pilsudski has been the dominant influence in Polish political life. The Ministers who, theoretically, are supposed to advise him, possess in truth little real influence. Indeed, he definitely prefers to act in opposition to their counsel. It is remarkable that he has gained a complete ascendancy over the foreign officers who have been brought into

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contact with him ; this wild Polish irregular has exercised a peculiar fascination over men of orthodox military training.

If it is asked to what political party Pilsudski belongs the answer is not easy. In the early days he was accounted a Socialist, and unquestionably had close relationship with the Socialist leaders and others even more to the Left. Seven years of Siberia are sufficient to give any man a right of citizenship in the most advanced camp. But in November 1918, when he had already become the head of the Polish State, he received a Socialist deputation, who came to greet " Comrade Pilsudski," with the following words :

" Gentlemen, I am no longer your comrade. In the beginning, we followed the same direction and took the tramway painted red, but I left it at the station—' Poland's Independence.' You are continuing the journey as far as the station—' Socialism.' My good wishes accompany you, but be so kind as to call me Sir."

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The fact is, that in each and all of the numerous parties which compose Polish political life, Pilsudski has devoted friends and bitter enemies. No party as a whole is for him or against him, except indeed the National Democrats of the Right, who have been constantly adverse, and whose principal newspapers have continued to criticise and ridicule Pilsudski even when Head of the State.

It will be seen that it is difficult to classify Pilsudski among military leaders. In his book *L'Année 1920*, he himself declares that he belongs to no school except to one which he calls that of open-air strategy—" La stratégie de plein air " (the words are given in French in the Polish text). By this he means that his method is not that of employing great masses, for he did not possess them, nor is it the strategy of combined action with the troops in close formation, nor is it the strategy of trench warfare. He claims that his consistent series of victories has been obtained by methods in which the

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troops moved freely in large spaces, strategy in which " les loups, les coqs de bois, les élans et les lièvres peuvent se mouvoir librement sans nuire a l'œuvre de guerre, a l'œuvre de la victoire."

In reply to critics, Pilsudski has written as follows : " My system has achieved results which could not have been obtained by those theoreticians who have criticised me and who have declared that my victories were not the result of science, but merely happened because the battles in which I have been engaged have been only half-battles or quarter-battles, mere scraps to which the grand theories of war are not applicable. My reply to these critics is that what they call a scrap has powerfully influenced the destinies of two States with 150 million inhabitants. This scrap, if the result had been other than it was, would have shaken the destinies of the entire civilised world. As it resulted in a Polish victory, it established peace probably for a long period between the two States in conflict. Call it a scrap if you will, since

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there is no method or doctrine which can be applied to it."

So far I have spoken of Pilsudski mainly as a conspirator and as a soldier. In both rôles he had peculiar, almost supreme, qualities. His success in every great enterprise exceeded all expectations except his own. In his conduct of political affairs there is perhaps less to praise and to admire. Yet he has dominated Polish politics for more than a decade. No one can doubt the difficulty of this achievement. For of all nations the Poles are among the last to obey " ex libidine servitii," requiring to be moved at once by fear and love.

His earliest and perhaps most serious rival in the first year after the war was Paderewski, and the struggle between them had moments of intense dramatic interest. Paderewski had rendered notable service to the Polish cause in America. He remembered how large a number of Poles had become prosperous citizens of the United States, and realised that there were many young Americans whose practical

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sympathy in the cause of liberty it would be possible, with his remarkable gift of eloquence, to stimualte. In his early days Paderewski gave a concert in a small Californian town, the cost of the concert being guaranteed by two unknown students. More than a quarter of a century later, Paderewski, when Prime Minister of Poland, received two Cadillac cars, a present from Herbert Hoover, President of the United States, one of the students who had guaranteed the concert.

Pilsudski and Paderewski were alike only in one thing—devotion to Poland. The brooding, taciturn conspirator, with his menacing scowl, had little in common with the delicate artistic genius who, attired in violation of every canon of sartorial sobriety, had been the idol of concert halls both in Europe and America; a bird of paradise, affecting almost feminine grace, and exercising quasi-feminine charm. Picturesque accounts are given of long midnight conversations between these two—Pilsudski holding forth in dull monologue, thundering along like a heavy

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bass which overwhelmed the delicate treble of his interlocutor.

Paderewski was little adapted to Polish political life: the necessity for an infinite number of interviews in the day, the frequent interruptions, the absence of leisure for recuperation, reflection, and hygiene. He particularly resented intrusion upon the hour which he religiously set aside for gymnastic exercises, and for the cares of a rather fanciful toilet.

Pilsudski despised all such refinements, accustomed as he had been in youth to the hard life of the Siberian exile. With clear perspicacity he realised that Paderewski was unfitted for the rough-and-tumble of politics, and he decided to proceed alone along the path of reconstruction.

There can be no question about Pilsudski's outstanding qualities. Supreme patriotism, complete disinterestedness as regards money, kindness to his subordinates, contempt of danger. On the other hand, he is unsuited to a democratic regime; disdainful of the

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opinion of others, impatient of contradiction, secretive, distrustful, an easy prey to extravagant imaginings, even though the impossible for others may be feasible for him. His enemies state that he is an incurable intriguer, but he remains true to his immediate friends, and is grateful for services rendered. Altogether a remarkable phenomenon produced in a period of profound and violent revolution, and only possible in such a period—intolerable otherwise.

If Poland to-day, twelve years after the Treaty of Versailles, enjoys increased consideration among the Powers of the world, and is rated financially not last among the Central European States, this result may be attributed in large part to the man who has exercised authority with a freedom from restraint only possible to a Dictator. More fortunate than the Emperor Galba, of him it may be said: "Omnium consensu impar imperio nisi imperasset."

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THE LAST OF THE SULTANS

THOSE whom diplomacy or finance brought to Constantinople in the last years of the nineteenth century could not fail to form an opinion—right or wrong—of Abdul Hamid, for he was the true centre of power and authority. He was the last of the Sultans.

His successor, Reshad Effendi, hardly counts; though for a few months nominally Caliph, he had no real authority, and acted submissively in accordance with the orders of the Young Turk Committee.

Among many peculiarities, qualities, and

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Topical Press Agency.

ABDUL HAMID.

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National Gallery Portrait.

MAHOMED II.

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defects, nothing was more remarkable about Abdul Hamid than his resemblance to Mahomed II, the conqueror of the Byzantine Empire in 1453. Those who wish to form an idea of the appearance of the Sultan of 1900 need only examine the portrait of Mahomed II in the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. Painted by Gentile Bellini some years after the conquest of Constantinople, this picture seems to forecast the future, and to suggest the typical features of a long succession of Ottoman rulers.

The similarity between Mahomed II and Abdul Hamid is the more singular and curious if one considers the number of years by which they were separated—four or five centuries—and the difference of their fates: one a great conqueror, the other a timid recluse concentrated throughout his reign on the question of his own personal safety. But the same characteristic pose of the head and shoulders marks both; the same glance, suggesting at once suspicion and cruelty. No one, either after examining the picture in the National Gallery

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or being admitted to audience by Abdul Hamid, could retain the illusion that the Imperial State is a guarantee of sensuous enjoyment or of serene content. And, indeed, the history of Oriental despots, not less in Turkey than elsewhere, justifies Bacon's disbelief in the pleasures of high place: "Certainly great persons need to borrow other men's opinions to think themselves happy; for, if they are happy as it were by report, perhaps they find the contrary within. Men in great places are thrice servants, so that they have no freedom; neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times."

That the physical type should be transmitted through the years is the more surprising since the harem traditions of the House of Othman were strictly observed during the intervening centuries. Princes took their wives and concubines from the alien race of the Circassians, not from Turkish stock, nor indeed from princely families, but from slaves selected solely for their physical

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attraction. The racial family type was transmitted exclusively through the male line.

Living forty years ago in Constantinople, one was constantly impressed with the similarity of events which occurred during the reign of Abdul Hamid with those recorded by historians of the time of the Claudian and Flavian Emperors. What methods Byzantium inherited from Rome had been handed on to the Turk almost unaltered, while the subsequent four and a half centuries of Ottoman rule saw no reform and little innovation. Thus it came about that Roman influence remained dominant under Eastern rulers through nearly two thousand years.

When the troops of Mahomed entered Constantinople, they thought to have captured the heart of Byzantium ; in reality it was the atmosphere of the beautiful city, its enervating climate, its traditions of luxury, its skill in the minor and meaner methods of government, which captured, enslaved, and enfeebled the barbarian.

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Readers both of Roman and Byzantine history are sometimes surprised at the influence exercised by certain classes of the community: astrologers, magicians, fortune-tellers, and secret informers. In the time of Abdul Hamid, these last were supreme. Spies obtained even greater power than they had enjoyed in Rome and in Byzantium. None could escape the baneful influence of tales told at the Palace by secret "journaldji." Members of the organisation were to be found everywhere: it included Ministers, high officials, and Court functionaries. All classes contributed recruits to the ranks of those whose clandestine reports were handed to the Sultan through some secret channel. Everyone went in fear of informers; officials despised them, but bowed to their superior power to assist—still more to their power to ruin. A Minister might hold the seal of office—he might attend Cabinet Councils; if he was not one of the Palace spies it was not worth while to obtain his support or to buy his favour through traditional Eastern methods. The real power

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in a department was probably in the hands of some subordinate official, who had his own channel for exercising influence at the Palace.

Those who have experience of information obtained by these means know how worthless it usually is. Inspired in large part by malevolence, permeated with the essential idea that scandal and calumny make better copy than truth, the secret reports received by Abdul Hamid would appear, if published, a tissue of malignant futility. But, such as they were, they filled his life. They also blocked his cellars, for, at his deposition, the underfloors of Yildiz were found obstructed with sackfuls of delation.

The net result on the mind of the Sultan, for whom these reports were fabricated, must have been to destroy all serenity, all confidence in human beings, and to make his life an anxious struggle to escape assassination. The suspicion that such was the effect on Abdul Hamid is confirmed by his behaviour throughout a troubled, pitiable reign. In the audiences he granted it was always the same

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story. Time and again he complained to me that his was a most unquiet and unhappy lot, consisting of incessant toil, with little pleasure and no satisfaction. His main recreation was pistol-shooting; at this he became such an adept that he could write his name on a target with successive shots at twenty paces. He seldom rode, though his stable contained some beautiful animals. I shall never forget seeing Harry Chaplin, arrayed in a ceremonial frock-coat and high-hat, ride these fiery Arabs round and round the riding school at the Sultan's invitation on the smallest and most slippery of saddles. The spectacle almost cured the potentate of his obstinate Anglophobia.

The transaction of business with the Turkish Government under Abdul Hamid was a test of patience and staying power. Acceptance of any scheme or proposal by the Cabinet or by the Grand Vizier was of small importance; it was only the first stage in a long journey. What mattered was Palace approval. Abdul Hamid's method of showing

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that his was the supreme authority was to postpone the Imperial Iradé, or signature, for weeks and months, so that all concerned should realise that his was the sanction that mattered. During these weeks and months, those interested in concessions had to pay interminable visits to the Sultan's private secretary or to the leading chamberlains at the Palace. Of the hours spent there, a small proportion was devoted to serious discussion ; the rest consisted in ceremonial courtesy and the consumption of innumerable cups of coffee. The transaction of business was restricted. For the Palace officials knew very little of public affairs, and it was part of Palace etiquette that all discussions should take place in the presence of any other visitors who happened to be calling. These visitors sat round a large room on divans, and overheard practically all that was going on. Progress was therefore painfully slow. If a solution at length came, it was brought about less by argument than by the condition of the Public Exchequer, and the dire necessity

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for financial assistance. A scheme was seldom approved on logical grounds of public benefit; the force behind approval was the need of cash to meet salaries already too long in arrear.

At the formal dinners which the Sultan gave to an Ambassador or to some foreign visitor of distinction, there was more ceremony than conversation. The Sultan paid ceremonial compliments, which were returned by the visitor in proportion with his ability to conform to Eastern etiquette. The Master of Ceremonies translated the Sultan's words, making profound obeisances to his Sovereign; obeisances so deep and so repeated that he was soon bathed in perspiration, and one abstained from further exchange of compliment or commonplace, lest the intermediary should melt away. The Sultan frequently apologised for the forms of amusement which he provided for his guests. And, in truth, they were paltry —usually performances by some passing music-hall troupe—the most appreciated part of the entertainment as far as the Sultan was concerned being the most farcical.

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It is the custom of some Western writers to portray Abdul Hamid as a fiend of intense malignity, constantly devising some new method of oppression, and content only when giving secret orders for torture and assassination. It would be more correct to depict him as a hunted animal, pursued by the hounds of fate, snarling and biting at them like a fox at bay. The worst atrocities are probably committed by those who are most afraid, and Abdul Hamid must definitely be placed in this category.

Regarding Abdul Hamid's relations with Western Powers, an unfortunate episode in early life poisoned his mind against England. The British Ambassador, Sir Henry Layard, was—in the first years of Abdul Hamid's reign—an intimate friend of the Sovereign. Invited frequently to the Palace, he enjoyed special privileges, and was consulted on many points of diplomacy and even of administration. As a professed philo-Turk, he became an object of suspicion to the Liberal Party in England, and more especially to Gladstone.

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In 1880 the Conservatives fell, and Gladstone took office. Layard feared that the charges made against him of excessive partiality for the Turk endangered his continuance in the post of Ambassador; he also felt that public opinion believed him to be more anti-reform and less pro-Christian than he really was. He resolved therefore to put himself right on both counts, and to serve at once the interest of truth and the interest of ambition. Accordingly, he wrote a dispatch to London, reviewing the whole position from a strictly impartial standpoint. Neither of his objects was attained. He failed to pacify Gladstone, who not only recalled the Ambassador, but published his dispatch. The impartiality of Layard's review, revealed by this indiscreet and unexpected publication, so incensed the Sultan that he accepted with malignant satisfaction the recall of his former friend. Unfortunately, the Monarch's resentment persisted beyond the individual, and he remained throughout his reign a convinced believer in the perfidy of Albion.

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This episode and its political consequences put an end to the cordiality and confidence which had long existed between Great Britain and Turkey. As regards Abdul Hamid's relations with other Western Powers, it was a saying of the late Baron Hirsch, who had intimate and practical knowledge of Turkish negotiations, that only one Power was trusted by Turkey at a given time, the others being negligible and undeserving of a financier's attention.

After Layard's recall, Germany became the trusted Power in Constantinople. Served by a succession of able Ambassadors, from Hatzfeldt to Marschall von Bieberstein, no other influence could compete with the German. This pre-eminence was markedly increased by Germany's tolerant attitude towards the Armenian massacres. Alone among the Powers she abstained from remonstrating energetically against Abdul Hamid's treatment of his Armenian subjects. It was not until Wolff-Metternich represented Germany at Constantinople that this attitude

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changed. The Ambassador framed a protest so energetic that the Sultan asked if Wolff-Metternich had come to Stamboul as the envoy of Great Britain.

Much has been written about the massacres of the Armenians in 1895, but it is doubtful if the real truth has yet been published. In his otherwise admirable work on Abdul Hamid, Sir Edwin Pears minimises the danger to public order of the action of Armenian secret societies, and suggests that mild measures would have been adequate to meet the case. But conspirators who, without any special grievance against the Institution, rushed the State Bank at Galata, shot the hall-porter, and hurled bombs at the cashiers—merely for the purpose of drawing the attention of the Powers to their political grievances—are not the harmless victims their apologists assert. Men who could plan and execute deeds of such violence would proceed to further excesses unless sternly repressed. Having tried the prentice hand of assassination on victims innocent and unconnected

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with wrongs for which they claimed redress, they would be capable of any outrage. Might not events have occurred similar to those which subsequently happened in Russia ? It must be admitted that strong action was necessary, and one cannot blame Abdul Hamid for ordering effective repression. But nothing could justify the terrible vengeance which he enforced on the whole Armenian people, nor does it soften the horror which should be felt at the unspeakable cruelties committed under a later regime in order to expel or exterminate the race.

Looking back on events at an interval of nearly forty years, one is tempted to ask whether the whole action of the European Powers in endeavouring to enforce reform did not result in more harm than good. It induced the Armenians to look for salvation to foreign diplomatic assistance, and diverted them from endeavouring to get on with the Turks as best they could. With superior intelligence and adaptability—with industrial activity and financial talent—the Armenians occupied a position of con-

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siderable favour in the old Turkish world, and were regarded by the Turks as useful assistants in special departments: indeed, as indispensable for most operations of finance and commerce. It was a fatal mistake for the Armenians to intrigue abroad in order to bring pressure upon their Turkish rulers. The pressure proved ineffectual, but it alarmed the Turk: conscious of the superior ability of the Armenian in all that was not force, he resorted to force as the only available means of maintaining his authority.

The last days of Abdul Hamid were pitiful. After thirty years of personal government, based mainly upon spies and secret reports, discontent had spread to all classes of the community. The Empire lost provinces—the Sultan lost prestige; the population were weary of waiting for remedial legislation; personal freedom was precarious, since it was at the mercy of any Palace spy who bore a grudge or whose attempt at blackmail was resisted. Discontent was specially rife in the Army, and the best authorities assert that it

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was irritation at the spy system which caused the military outbreak of July 1908. It is not easy to understand how it came about that, notwithstanding the elaborate system of espionage, conspiracy gathered sufficient strength to effect a revolution. But history repeats itself, and the revolution of 1908 followed the precise course described by Tacitus, Suetonius, and other authors as characteristic of military revolts eighteen centuries before.

The Sultan was deprived of personal power in July 1908, a Parliamentary constitution being proclaimed amidst the rejoicing of all creeds and nationalities. Whether in the months following Abdul Hamid attempted a counter-stroke or not may be uncertain; the essential fact is that deprivation of power was followed by dethronement in April 1909, and by the elevation of another Sultan in the person of Reshad Effendi, Abdul Hamid's younger brother. The details of the scene when a commission of four conveyed the news to Abdul

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Hamid[1] that he had been dethroned and that his younger brother reigned in his stead present an abject picture.

In the early morning of April 27, 1909, the Commissioners reached Yildiz, and informed the Sultan's secretary that they had a personal communication to make to His Majesty. The Secretary warned them that His Majesty was in an excited condition, and that he might draw a revolver on them. They were then surrounded by a party of thirty black eunuchs, and admitted into the room where they were to deliver their message. A noticeable feature of the room was the number of mirrors enabling the Sultan to see what persons entered, even from behind him. A few minutes later Abdul Hamid came in, accompanied by his little son, Abdurrahman Effendi. The deputation advanced into the centre of the room and respectfully saluted. The eunuchs and secre-

[1] This description is based on *Abdul Hamid*, by Sir Edwin Pears, whose account tallies with that in *The Fall of Abdul Hamid*, by Francis McCullagh.

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taries remained near the door by which the deputies had entered. Abdul Hamid asked why they had come, whereupon Essad Pasha replied that they were there by the order of the Chambers acting in conformity with a *Fetva* that had been pronounced by the Sacred Court and confirmed by the Sheik-ul-Islam, declaring that His Majesty Abdul Hamid might lawfully be deposed, and that, in consequence, Reshad would immediately be proclaimed Sultan. He added that the National Convention "charges itself with His Majesty's personal safety and that of his family." The message threw Abdul Hamid into a state of great excitement; he pleaded passionately for a guarantee that his life would be spared, urging that he had done much for the country; that he had conducted war against the Greeks and been victorious, and did not deserve to be deposed. Towards the end of the interview he appeared to be in a state of collapse, and it was noticeable that the last few days had told upon him; he had aged, his hair had lost its dye and

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now showed grey. The deputation then retired, and the last sound they heard was the boyish voice of the little Prince, crying as if his heart would break.

A few days afterwards, Abdul Hamid was conveyed, with three Sultanas, four concubines, and a retinue, consisting in all of twenty-seven persons, to Salonika. He was also accompanied, at his express desire, by a favourite Angora cat. The escort conveyed him to the railway station at Stamboul, which, after a reign of thirty years, he now saw for the first time. The admiration for Western innovations this novelty aroused in him was somewhat subdued by a wearisome journey of twenty-eight hours. When the train reached Salonika, the deposed Sultan was lodged in the villa of a wealthy Jewish family, and thenceforth disappears from history. After a few months of Salonika, some of his harem left him, finding little to their taste in his fallen state, or in life in a commercial town. Later, he was removed to a small palace on the Bosphorus, where he expired on February 11, 1918.

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APPRECIATIONS

THE GERMAN CHARACTER

THE military achievement of the German people in the Great War, when for four years, supported only by weak allies, they threatened to inflict defeat on the greatest military combination ever brought together in the world's history, is so remarkable, that the characteristics and principal features of the nation are worthy subjects of examination. To obtain a clear picture of their military achievement, the history of the war must be isolated from the period which preceded it, and considered in-

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dependently of reflections on pre-war policy. Thus only is a fair idea likely to be formed of the military power of the people by whom the Allies were confronted.

So much has been written on the German character from the time of Tacitus to that of Madame de Staël that it argues some temerity to embark upon the theme again.

The country which Queen Victoria called in the 1840's "our dear little Germany" probably deserves these two epithets less than any in the dictionary. The greatest admirers of the German people can hardly apply the word "dear"; their most virulent opponents cannot speak of them as "little." If superficially unattractive, they are fundamentally great. They are in the highest degree a peculiar people. To take outward appearance first: in this they are clearly distinguished from the nations which surround them in Central Europe. The dome-like heads, which are so much smaller than they look, the thick-set, round bodies, the peculiar development of the region which in a horse would

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be called the crest, their stiff, angular manners, are all in marked contrast with the suavity and grace of their neighbours, the French, the Austrians, the Bohemians, and the Poles. It has been said that the German figure is the only successful attempt yet made to square the circle—in that it is at once square and round. But whatever its contour, it denotes marked solidity and strength. The Germanic race is amongst the sturdiest in the world, the most capable of standing privation, a race of outstanding physical endurance. Their capacity for resisting fatigue and for patiently undergoing long hours of monotonous toil and labour certainly exceeds that of Western Europeans.

Mentally and morally they are not less differentiated than physically. The current English conception of the German is that he is a machine which never stops working; that he enjoys nothing so much as work. This is an exaggeration. But it is undoubted that the German has not only a physical capacity for long hours, but an innate in-

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clination towards thoroughness, earnestness, and *Gründlichkeit*. He is more than a tireless plodder and an inveterate sap. Whatever he may have been before 1913, he has developed since the war a marked aptitude for physical enjoyment of all kinds, and displays to-day for athletics and sport an enthusiasm and aptitude which will soon make him a dangerous competitor for the highest honours. His physical strength combined with his love of method and his capacity for taking pains cannot fail to lead to great results. In the realm of amusement as distinguished from athletics German moralists assert that development has been too rapid. While forms of self-indulgence may be different from those in vogue in this country, the German pursues his pleasures no less eagerly than his English cousin, and holds to them no less tenaciously. The conception that the German willingly forgoes leave if the call of business makes his absence from work undesirable is quite erroneous. Let the time for his annual period of rest and

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recuperation come round, nothing will induce him to remain at the desk. A grave crisis or even a great war may be on the horizon, he will take the train and proceed to some *Badeort* or sanatorium, ready to undergo a severe regime for the restoration of his health and possibly roam through the woods in a state of nudity with a view to getting closer to nature.

Since the war, as has already been said, the Germans have taken to games much more vigorously than before. They were impressed with the benefit derived by the English from their addiction to sport, and by the rapidity with which a new officer-corps could be created from youths untrained except from the practice of team games at school. In tennis, in boxing, in football, they are making rapid strides ; golf evokes boundless enthusiasm. It is possible that the development of athletic games of a humane character may influence the national mind in affording an alternative to the only sport previously practised, centred as it

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was on the pursuit and destruction of animals.

When not in training, the German takes advantage of his tough constitution and his strong health to indulge almost more than any other nation in the pleasures of the table. From the earliest times the Teutonic tribes have been great eaters and drinkers, and the present generation are not unworthy inheritors of the tradition, although their feasts do not now last three days, like those cited by the Roman writers. The extent to which alcohol is considered a necessary ingredient of social life is illustrated by the following anecdote of Madame de Staël and Goethe. When that talented but terrific lady was at Weimar in 1803, and on friendly terms with the literary circle which centred round the Grand Ducal court, she complained at a dinner, in a tone of Parnassian playfulness, that Goethe was only agreeable after he had drunk a bottle of champagne. Goethe replied: "Il faut donc que nous ayons bu parfois un petit coup ensemble."

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Their capacity for work may be remarkable, but it is not more remarkable than their capacity for late hours heavily charged with meat and drink. Officials and business men will sit up till three and four in the morning night after night, either talking or playing cards or dancing, and will accompany these occupations with copious libations. Yet the next morning at 9 a.m., or earlier, they will be at their office ready to do justice to a day's task. With similar hours and a similar regime any member of a weaker race would be totally incapable of serious application.

Another peculiar feature of the German mind is a predilection for severe discipline and precise orders. A German subordinate appears to desire not to be treated with too great civility or kindness; servants not only work better under quasi-military regulations, but far prefer curt and precise commands to anything less categorical. Gibbon says: "It was a fundamental principle in the Roman army that a good soldier should fear his officers more than the enemy." In the

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old German Army, this Roman tradition was certainly maintained.

It has been said that the best description of the German of to-day is the *Germania* of Tacitus, but this view can only be held by those who have not read Tacitus or who do not know Germany. Either the German characteristics of the first century have been modified fundamentally or Tacitus gave an inaccurate picture. He relates that among other peculiarities they are "intolerant of toil and labour; flocks and herds are their only riches; gold and silver are withheld from them; they do not enjoy the possession of these metals as others do; jurisdiction is vested in the priests; they fight with their tenderest pledges in the field; they are incited to deeds of valour by the shrieks of their wives and the cries of their children. When routed they are incited to renew the charge by their wives, who bare their breasts to the danger. They see something sacred in the female sex, whose advice is always heard and whose responses are considered oracular."

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None of these peculiarities can be observed in Germany to-day. Indeed, their salient characteristics are directly opposed to those described above. Madame de Staël is not much nearer the mark. She describes Germany as a country without a capital, and consequently without any centre dictating the laws of taste. This is no longer true, since Berlin now dominates both politics and business. Patriotism, she says, is lacking in Germany, and so are men of action ; the criticism to-day would be that in 1914 patriotism was too impulsive and men of action too influential. The rigidity of German etiquette has been relaxed since her day, and it is no longer the case that in German society everyone is kept in his place in the hierarchy as if it were a post of duty.

Regarding the German language, there is less to criticise in her observations. The verb is still kept till the end of the sentence, and preserves the mystery of the meaning in prolonged suspense. Whether this renders brilliant conversation impossible, as Madame

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de Staël asserts, may be doubtful, and is a point of taste. In some minds, there is a certain charm in the elaborate inversion of what appears a reasonable order—reminiscent of the Ciceronian phrase—but the complication is, perhaps, better adapted to the rostrum than the salon.

The German is exceptionally tolerant of pain. Not only does he bear pain stoically, but he apparently feels it less than men of other races. Medical students who have studied in German hospitals testify that the capacity of patients to endure suffering is far greater than in England or in France. German doctors and surgeons have become so accustomed to this fact that they resort to anæsthetics less than their English colleagues. Their contempt for squeamishness is extreme, perhaps excessive.

The general belief in the superiority of German erudition is certainly well founded, but the high reputation which German scholars have earned is not divorced from complete indifference to wearying the reader.

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The extreme precision which they bring to their work and the exhaustive nature of their examination of problems proceed to some extent from technical probity, and an ambition to do full justice to the subject at the cost of prolixity and tedium. To make brilliant phrases, to prepare striking juxtapositions, is foreign to their preoccupation. Any such ambition they would regard as frivolous and contemptible. Satire they positively dislike, and authorities on literature have declared that Heine is to-day intolerable to a healthy German mind on account of the persistent irony of his attitude towards life.

Exaggerated deference to professional opinion is possibly the explanation of Germany's greatest triumphs and of her great defeat. The technician, military, scientific, or professional, cares only for the opinion of his expert colleagues and despises the public. Conducive as this attitude may be to highly specialised efficiency in a particular branch, it opens the door to vast political errors and is apt to be accompanied by an

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incapacity to understand other nations. While it enabled the military leaders of Germany to create a war machine of astonishing efficiency and strength, it permitted the pre-war naval development, the invasion of Belgium, and the unrestricted submarine campaign.

And the same professionalism may be held to explain, or at least to be consistent with, the two main weaknesses of the German people—the absence of political instinct and their peculiar addiction to envy and jealousy. The first is due to dominance of the expert and disregard of the public voice. Moreover, the fact adverted to above, that their minds are encyclopædic and exhaustive, stands in the way of a tactful sense of political expediency, and impedes their giving precedence to the argument which is suitable for the moment and which would clinch the debate. They prefer to hear all the arguments rather than to select the best. Preoccupied by the desire to write an exhaustive treatise on a problem, leaving nothing un-

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explored, nothing unsaid, they miss the sense of what the particular moment requires. A full statement appeals to them more than the most brilliant epitome.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of the German mind, as compared with that of surrounding nations, is their peculiar capacity for bringing philosophy and science to bear on the problems of practical life. With other races, book-learning and all that is derived from scientific training have a tendency to remain in a separate compartment, divorced from the daily task. With the German, learning has been absorbed into the blood; he remains through life something of a student, something of a professor. A modern writer cites a phrase overheard in a café as typical of the German view of life. One student said to another: "I, for myself, value a human being only inasmuch as his attitude towards the problems of the cosmos is an adequate attitude," and another writer observes that many Germans have a dual ambition to be at once Faust and Siegfried.

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Turning to the view that they are abnormally prone to jealousy and envy, do not these passions infest all professional coteries ? Are they not avoided only through the absence of that technical competition which a close career induces ? In Germany, since everyone is more or less a technician and belongs to a definite school or a definite profession, personal jealousy is scarcely to be avoided. Avoidance may be theoretically possible, but it is certainly not achieved ; one has only to remember the distinguished statesmen who, since the war, have been assassinated or threatened in Germany to realise that exceptional brilliance and superior intelligence are dangerous attributes, and are apt to become targets for the assassin's bullet.

The extreme professionalism of the German mind may be illustrated from personal experience. In early years after the war, Englishmen were frequently addressed by German ex-combatants as follows : " Throughout the war I only fought on the fronts against the English " ; this being honestly considered

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not as a reason for a feeling of hostility, but as an exceptionally sound foundation for future friendship with all Englishmen. German officers enjoyed nothing more than meeting ex-enemies against whom they had fought in a given battle, and discussing the technical aspects of the contest; this usually meant a review of the many mistakes the leaders on both sides committed, and a cordial assurance that the bravery and endurance of the opponent were duly recognised and honoured.

Such a dispassionate professional attitude is difficult for an Englishman to understand. We incline to judge the situation as a whole, including notably what we consider the moral aspect. We allow our sympathies to exercise a dominant influence on our professional judgment. To the German the dry objective view seems to come as a result of professional training. There is little or no affectation about it, although as a people they are certainly not unsentimental.

Comparing Germany with the surrounding

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nations, the prevailing impression is that of thoroughness, earnestness, sturdiness, and strength. In many of their qualities they recall the Dorian tribes of Greece. Their immense belief in the power of the State, their confidence in the capacity of their own people to rule over weaker tribes, their reliance upon military discipline as a dominant force among nations, a certain contempt for the artistic and luxurious, their instinctive adherence to the view that the pursuit of wealth, while legitimate in the degenerate times of to-day, is altogether on a lower level than service to the State, particularly service in a military capacity—all these are attributes of a virile and masterful race. A widespread German view on this matter may be illustrated by the following saying of a Sophist from classical times: "Let me always believe that he who commands thirty legions is the wisest man in the world." The German possesses in addition to these characteristics a capacity for business, both industrial and financial, such as has

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rarely been surpassed. Strength in this direction, so exceptional and rare in conjunction with military talent, is the peculiarity which will always place Germany among the most powerful nations of the world.

Possessing the qualities and gifts which we have indicated, it is not surprising that the German regards himself as superior to most of his geographical neighbours. It is vain to induce him to believe that either Poles or Czechs are in any way comparable to his own countrymen, either as citizens or as soldiers. Even the French, for whose culture he has a great admiration, he regards as essentially Ionic, partly because of the grace and agility of the Gallic mind. The English he considers politically wise and incomprehensibly lucky, far wiser indeed than we probably are, and far luckier than he thinks we deserve to be. Our success he attributes in the main to a political instinct which enables the British Government, without either logical argument or scientific analysis, to adopt instinctively the most

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worldly-wise course in any conceivable emergency. It would be superhuman not to feel some envy at the possession by a rival nation of such a useful endowment, obtained, as seems to them, without painful effort. But there is little or no hostility to England of a pronounced character, except indeed among naval and to a lesser extent military officers, whose professional careers have been suddenly curtailed by drastic reduction of the Forces.

The difficulty of giving a clear account of the feeling in Germany regarding England proceeds in part from the curious fact that those sections of opinion which are temperamentally most in sympathy with English life are politically the most adverse to the English policy of European pacification. The position is approximately as follows :

The territorial classes in Germany are more English in mode of life and feeling than any similar class in any other European country or than any other class in Germany. Dine with a German country gentleman, and you will be amazed to find how exclusively the

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conversation is confined to sport. Not a word except of the chase, shooting, and bucolic interests. Discussion on art and literature is banned. The view of life is identical with that prevailing in the squirearchy of England in the more remote districts.

On the other hand, in liberal circles, which politically are favourable to the English policy of establishing an understanding between France and Germany, the temperamental and cultural affinity is far closer to Paris than it is to London: it is indeed almost hostile to London. The intellectual atmosphere is advanced, cosmopolitan, and humanistic; the country gentleman view is derided as barbaric. Art, literature, music, and women are eagerly discussed and criticised. French painting of the modern school is keenly appreciated, French plays and French novels of a more advanced kind are read no less eagerly than in Paris.

This strange antinomy between political opinion and temperamental affinity renders a clear view of the feeling of Germany towards

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England more difficult to gauge than it otherwise would be. The essential paradox is there, and the result of it is that if our policy of European pacification achieves success it will be by the assistance of those who are temperamentally against us; while if it is wrecked it will be by the influence of the political section on the Right who have most affinity with the English mode of life.

The question is often asked, Can Germany be trusted? Is it possible to make an arrangement with the German Government, and to feel confident that it will be observed? Are not bad faith and a propensity to military aggression so ingrained with the Germans that no treaty can be relied upon to restrain them? We were all taught to believe this during the war. Can it be that it is no longer true?

The question in the form above stated is hardly susceptible of a definite answer, and this for several reasons. While my personal experience is extremely favourable to German respect for an engagement taken, and while I can assert that during the whole of the six

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years I was in Berlin I do not remember any definite promise which a German official or minister failed to carry through, this does not constitute an adequate reply to the inquiry, Can Germany be trusted? For the answer to the query will depend in the last resort upon German public opinion, and German public opinion is not entirely governed by a few officials in the Wilhelmstrasse, great as their influence may be. The views and prejudices of a considerable variety of different sections have to be considered. These classes and these parties differ from one another even more fundamentally than in other countries, so that it is difficult to speak categorically of the national will. Viewing the matter dispassionately, it would be rash to say that all classes and all parties are seriously desirous of peace, for it is clear that among the extreme Right, among the territorial aristocracy, and among the military caste there are influential groups who are in no way reconciled to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

On the other hand, it is no less true that

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there are large classes of the population to whom the idea of another war is intensely repugnant. The great mass of workmen organised under the Socialist Party, the majority of the Catholic Party organised under the Centre, a large proportion of the Democratic Party, are undoubtedly sincere in their detestation of war. Between these two wings lies the People's Party, where opinion is neither so military as it is on the Right nor so peaceful as it is on the Left and Centre. Taking a broad view, it may be said of the mass of the people that there is a considerable preponderance in favour of peace, this preponderance having increased substantially since the signature of the Treaty of Locarno.

I have said above that a definite answer to the question whether Germany can be trusted to maintain peace is hardly possible. It has been shown how divided opinion is; and opinion is not merely divided, it is fluctuating. Moreover, much depends on the treatment accorded to Germany by foreign nations. Thus while to-day, three years after the

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signature of the Treaty of Locarno, it may safely be asserted that a considerable majority of the German people is resolutely in favour of peace, the same would not have been the case had the policy which inspired the Ruhr occupation been continued, and had Locarno not been signed.

The peace spirit in Germany requires nourishment. It must be shown that if there is faithful execution by Germany of treaty clauses and of reparation clauses the merit of this action is recognised by the countries of the war Allies. It must be manifest that the desire for pacification is real, and that the benefit of pacification will be made reciprocal. Provided the spirit which prevailed at Locarno continues to guide the policy of the war Allies, I see no reason to apprehend any shifting of opinion in Germany such as will endanger the existence of a large majority in favour of the peaceful solution of international difficulties.

Far above their regard for any European nation the German has a profound respect for the United States. Its size, its immense

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wealth, the business capacity of its citizens, impress the German with the deepest admiration, and he is, moreover, neither blind to the possibility of financial support which Germany may in future derive from the United States, nor unmindful of the assistance already given. The United States have lent Germany not less than £300,000,000 during the last few years.

In all the more important developments in Germany during the post-war years, American influence has been decisive. Eliminate action taken on American advice, or in assumed agreement with American opinion, or in anticipation of American approval, and the whole course of policy would be altered.

This dominant power of American opinion on Germany may be explained in many ways and has many causes. The principal probably are: the plain geographical fact that the United States form part of another continent, and are therefore outside the sphere of old European rivalries; that their wealth is stupendous, the United States disposing of a

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financial capacity far in excess of that of any European country; that a marked affinity prevails between German and American life. The similarity of Berlin to an American city has impressed many travellers. The methods of American trade and finance are derived from Germany rather than from England, being based in the main on the traditions of Frankfurt and Hamburg.

All these influences would, however, have remained inoperative if the U.S.A. had not been represented in Berlin during the critical post-war period by men of unusual authority, and peculiarly in touch and sympathy with German life. Dresel, Houghton, and Schurman had received a large part of their education in Germany and had acquired a mastery of the language. They were all men of easy access, of wise counsel, and of wide sympathies; all were successful in establishing relations of intimate confidence with leading circles in Berlin, both political and financial. Many examples of their closeness to German life may be related. Let one

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suffice. Rathenau, the night before his assassination, spent the evening at the American Embassy in close conference with his bitter enemy and rival, Stinnes. At no other house in Berlin could this have occurred. Both men felt a peculiar confidence in Houghton; both realised that he understood their views and sympathised with their patriotic aspirations; both knew that he was discreet and reliable. His influence brought them closer together on this evening, which was to have so tragic a morrow, than they had been at any period of their previous careers.

The close sympathy and instinctive understanding between Americans and Germans is difficult to analyse and explain. The German accepts an American argument far more readily than that of a European. He will find the Frenchman too logical and precise, the Englishman too vague and instinctive, the Italian too subtle and ingenious, the Russian too changeable and insincere. The American he finds at once practical and con-

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vincing. What the French would criticise as prolix and hypocritical he finds full, thorough, and yet adequately idealistic and sentimental. His own thoroughness reconciles him to the exhaustive methods usually applied to American autobiography, and he endures without an anæsthetic the tale of the corner block that was bought for five dollars by a newsboy or a druggist's assistant, and is now worth several millions.

Looking back on six and a half years' close association with the German people, I am deeply impressed by their strength, power, thoroughness, reliability, and by their Doric conception of Life.

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THE FRENCH CHARACTER

SINCE the eleventh century France and England have been fighting on the same battlefields. Mostly as enemies, sometimes as Allies ; always to a certain extent rivals ; never with much mutual comprehension. No real hatred even when enemies—no real comradeship even when Allies. Until the Great War each nation enjoyed, without malevolence or animosity, an acute sense of the comic side of the other. Perhaps some envy, envy rather than hostility, and a peculiar reciprocal trust hardly to be explained on

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logical grounds. While England has always considered that the occupation of the Low Countries by a great Power would constitute a menace to our island security, we view without alarm the presence of France on the much nearer coast of Calais and Boulogne. On the other side, the French have not regarded our naval supremacy as representing a danger to their shores or to their commerce.

It is clear that our relations have been, and are, special and peculiar. A certain confidence, but no intimacy; some fellow-feeling, and a vague consciousness that together we stand for the strongest elements of European culture and civilisation.

In certain respects the French mind is superior to that of the neighbouring peoples. Clarity, love of order, balance, wit, restraint; in these matters the French excel others. Their dislike of hypocrisy, sloppiness, and cant, their distrust of sentimentality, their finesse and irony, save them from much that is wearisome in the life and literature of other nations.

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In some respects, let it be admitted that these others have the advantage. There must be reciprocity in such discussions, and appreciation to last should be mutual.

In the realm of manners the French have been supreme. It is to them that Europe owes such refinement and grace as its customs possess, and above all it owes to France the establishment of a standard of social behaviour. Who can deny that the progress from the sodden orgies of prolonged duration which dinners in England and Germany presented in the eighteenth century is largely due to French taste assisted by French cookery? To French eyes drunkenness is not the unfailing source of humour and amusement that it constitutes on the English stage. As a social custom it is not tolerated, as a subject of ridicule it is not required. The part we assign to the drunkard has long been taken by the mother-in-law and the deceived husband: these adequately meet the requirements of French comedy, perhaps more than

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adequately, yet they never appear to weary a Gallic audience.

One of the most characteristic peculiarities of the French mind is the extraordinary amount of diversion derived from sexual relationship and conjugal misfortune. These themes never seem to weary either in theory or practice. The French have a considerable contempt for our views on these matters, and probably underrate our capacity for deriving satisfaction from them. An extreme instance of their misjudgment was heard at Monte Carlo, when a professional lady said scornfully to an unresponsive Anglo-Saxon: "Votre luxure à vous autres, c'est le viskey."

Not that the French are abnormally immoral; certainly not as immoral as they appear to the casual foreigner, but they extract an inordinate amount of amusement from immorality. And this notwithstanding the fact that family life in France is closer than with us. Families live more together, and mutual obligations such as that of son to parent, and still more daughter to mother,

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are so rigorous that they would be found intolerable on this side of the Channel.

Throughout all relations of life the French live more by rule than by instinct. Everything is laid down and codified—little or nothing is left to individual judgment and personal feeling. There is a precise standard in all matters—to fall below it is to commit a solecism. Habits have become law—law which must not be infringed. And indeed most Frenchmen have no desire to infringe it. The discipline of custom and good manners is willingly observed. Many of these observances we should find beyond our indolent, easy-going habit of life. The minute formalities about introductions, the strict etiquette of visits, the obligation to engage for hours in general conversation, and forego the more intimate delights of *tête-à-tête*, these customs and many others Englishmen would find irksome and oppressive.

Then, again, the precision of the family budget would cramp our lax good-fellowship. Formal dinners at stated intervals—no casual

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hospitality, no "come when you please"—such unmethodical extravagance creates consternation in a well-ordered French breast. The expenditure of the month, of the year, must be laid down in advance and adhered to; if not, how will December 31 show a surplus?—how will it contribute to that fortune which will permit retirement from active life at a reasonable age, sons and daughters duly provided for? This is the key of the whole matter. In his heart every Frenchman desires to save, to accumulate so that he may have an old age free from care, with no business worry, just enjoyment of life, an assured position and conversation. That is the inherent peculiarity of the race, call it superiority if you will, that they enjoy the fact of being alive apart from incident or episode. Life is an art they have mastered—and one of their conclusions is that leisure with assured means and the dignity of a red ribbon is a legitimate basis for content.

With the English it is different. An average Englishman is frankly bored with

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leisure. He misses having to catch the 9.15 a.m. Conversation and introspection are not enough for him; he must have external stimulus and interest. To escape from idleness he reverts to business or plunges into recreation as if it were business.

It is clear that the French capacity for enjoying leisure may easily lapse into triviality or mere pleasure seeking. The division of fortunes in France accentuates the danger. Compelled by law to divide his estate into approximately equal portions—freed from the tradition of primogeniture—the French testator leaves each member of his family enough to live upon. This has drawbacks. There is no adequate supply of younger sons—first because families are small, and secondly because younger sons are left a competence, and thereby cease to be younger sons. Why then work? Life is there to be enjoyed.

No one who has seen the numbing effect on enterprise which results from too many people having enough to live upon, can fail to recognise how great is the national advan-

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tage of the inequality to which we submit. Not so much in the maintenance of great family estates nor in the preservation of family tradition. The essential is that younger sons must work. This necessity and our aversion to contemplative leisure have given England adventurers and pioneers who have made the Empire. Bayonets and organised force may have won it : *Res angusta domi* driving the younger sons abroad, reinforced by a spirit of enterprise, a love of adventure, and an innate capacity for exercising a tolerant authority, has made the Empire great.

Many observers are impressed by the French addiction to the theatre and their interest in all that concerns dramatic art, but I doubt if the vogue of the theatre in France exceeds that which prevails in other countries. A very remarkable trend of the national mind is towards literature. The critical faculty of the French is certainly unequalled ; in the realm of historical memoirs, of biography, and of all that concerns the technical side of

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letters they are supreme, and the love of large sections of the public for literature leads to a dissemination of works of high value greater than the lending library system permits in England. The deep concern of the public in literary affairs is indeed comparable with the German passion for music and the English love of sport and of games.

The exceptional wit of the French is proof against the most tragic circumstances. When Charlotte Corday was being conveyed to the guillotine, the cart was delayed by a hostile, hooting mob. The gaoler said, " Le trajet doit vous paraître bien long, citoyenne." She replied, " J'arriverai toujours à temps."

Many of us wish for close co-operation with the French. It is difficult to obtain on account of the sharp differentiation between the mental habits and mental tactics natural to each. The French are precise and clear : they have a definite scheme for everything, elaborated in advance ; trusting little to the

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inspiration of the moment, they abjure last-hour improvisations.

With us it is otherwise. Our minds work best when it is too late or nearly so. To think out a problem is repugnant to our temperament; to prepare a precise scheme to meet an unprecise future does not seem sound business. Let circumstances arise, we deal with them; we do not imagine them in advance. Apart from the probability that we should imagine wrong, the effort is painful. The expected may not, probably will not, occur. Why then elaborate a plan to meet it? Let us act as may seem best in the presence of the real fact. "'Tis folly to study how to play size-ace when you know not whether you shall throw it or no. A man must do according to the accidents and emergencies." [1]

The French facility for forming an image of events at a distance enables them to send clear and definite instructions to their agents abroad. And this leads to the result

[1] John Selden's *Table Talk*.

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that agents at a distance do not act enough on their own judgment, relying too implicitly upon instructions.

In our case the wisest Ministers send the least imperative, the least cramping orders and leave full latitude for local initiative. The man on the spot is trusted, and he is not trusted in vain. Isolate an Englishman from superior authority, cut him off from communication with anyone to whom he can refer for counsel, and he will do well. Tie him to a telephone or a telegraph wire and expect the worst. He will report inadequately, he will execute without conviction, he will fear to act on his own sound initiative. Moreover, he will probably receive quite inappropriate instructions.

It is in virtue of principles of independence obscurely followed that we won India and our Dominions beyond the Seas. By neglecting them, what has been won may be lost. Facility of communication may smother peripheral initiative.

If our neighbours have suffered in their

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colonial expansion from excessive centralisation, there is another section of colonial administration in which they have lately shown outstanding breadth and wisdom. I allude to their treatment of native races. This is best seen when contrasted with their attitude towards Europeans of Latin race—peoples with whom they are generally held to have such close affinity. There could be no greater mistake than to confound the French with the other so-called Latin races. Little similarity with the Italian, the Spanish, and the South American—still less with the peculiar Mediterranean type, the product of the great ports of Naples, Smyrna, Alexandria—the Frenchman stands out as essentially different in his intellectual outlook.

An ingenious writer has recently developed the thesis that the French come from a different stock to other Latins, and the theory has something in its favour. To certain observers it appears that French nature is not strictly Latin, in many qualities and characteristics being closer to Ionian Greece than to

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Rome, perhaps closer to the civilisation of the fifth and sixth centuries B.C. in Miletus and Asia Minor—not Athenian, as is claimed, more remote still from Sparta; essentially not Dorian. The Italians and the Spaniards, on the other hand, are certainly closer to ancient Rome than to anything Hellenic.

Turning to their attitude towards coloured races, the critical superciliousness of the French as regards other Latins is in strong contrast with their attitude towards the darker races under their control. This is an unexpected and interesting fact in recent French history. They have discarded the colour bar, displaying little prejudice against black, brown, or yellow blood. They have had recourse to men of other races as an element of military strength to an extent unprecedented in European history—to an extent, indeed, which alarms some critical observers of France conversant with the dangerous influence of mercenary troops in the later history of Rome and Carthage. The modern vogue for the negro began in

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France, and spread thence to the U.S.A., where it met first with violent antagonism. At one time the authorities in Paris were given a hint that the presence of so many negroes in public places was abnoxious to American visitors.

The explanation of the anomaly may be found in the feminine bias of the French nature, a bias which pervades their whole attitude towards life. Are not women less prejudiced than men regarding racial differences—more ready to recognise and welcome new talent, no matter what the origin? On the other hand, more inclined to jealousy of any possible rival—more keen to detect and resent competition where a claim to equality can be made.

With a people so self-centred as the French, it is strange to what extent they are unprejudiced, how ready they are to recognise merit and talent, provided it is found in one with whom there is no possible rivalry or competition.

Against this they have a characteristic

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which has done much to diminish French popularity among friendly nations, viz. a curious unwillingness to recognise service rendered or to express normal feelings of gratitude for assistance. You may search the histories of the Great War which have been written in France with unrivalled literary skill—you will find little mention of the British Army, and no adequate recognition of its heroism, its tenacity, and its devoted co-operation. Still less will you find due acknowledgment of the Russian contribution to the earlier years, of their stupendous losses, nor of the severe sacrifices endured by Italy when she joined the Allies, and held so large a proportion of the enemy's strength. The best friends of France are those who most deplore this singular reluctance.

Formerly, it was held that the French were better comrades in fair weather than foul—but the Great War proved their astounding power of recuperation in moments of dire anxiety.

The position of France in the realm of art

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has been variously judged. To form a fair estimate, it is essential to separate pure art from applied art. In the former the French claim to pre-eminence may be disputed. In the latter they are supreme, notably in delicate detail, in high finish, in refined ornament. Throughout the centuries the poverty of mass effects in France has been in constant contrast with the perfection of their detailed ornamentation. When they attempt the classical and monumental there is an apparent conflict between the design and the fundamental affinity of the artist. Unexcelled, almost unrivalled as they are in representing the light and fanciful, the graces of life, the intimate scene, their grandiose becomes pompous. In major creations it has been said that they lack the sense of vast proportion and the genius of majestic design.

There are few supreme names in French painting—there are a multitude of delightful artists. In their own manner who can equal Watteau, Chardin, Fragonard ?

In architecture there is a similar contrast.

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What is more delicate, more ethereal, than a French Gothic cathedral? Inferior undoubtedly in strength and mass to the magnificent and sombre splendour of the cathedrals of Spain, but a creation of exquisite grace and spirituality.

Turning to domestic architecture, is there anything more delightful than early Louis XIII and early Louis XV? Here is French art relatively free from foreign influence. Later on, these periods were spoiled by the importation of foreign styles.

The fatal mistake in French art is infidelity to French standards and the adoption of methods from foreign countries unsuited to the national genius. Failure attends the French artist essaying to produce the monumental, no less certainly than it attends the foreign craftsman endeavouring to compete with the delicacy of French detail.

French art is at its greatest when inspired solely by indigenous racial ideals. It is marred by foreign intrusion—and by the borrowed or imitated exotic. The acute

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critical sense of French artists has not been blind to this danger. When Fragonard left Paris for the French Academy at Rome, Boucher said to him : " Mon cher Frago, tu vas voir en Italie les ouvrages de Michel-Ange, de Raphael et de leurs imitateurs. Je te dis comme ami—Si tu prends ces gens-là au sérieux, tu es un garçon perdu."

Of all accomplishments in which the French excel, the most notable is propaganda. They seem to possess all the qualities required for success in this valuable national accomplishment. The first condition is perhaps self-satisfaction; the second, devotion to the task and adequate expenditure of time and money on its performance. Whatever the qualities required, the French possess them, for they are unrivalled propagandists. Self-satisfaction is so natural with them that it ceases to be offensive. There is no bravado, no assumption : merely the recognition of their own conviction of superiority. In the cult of Narcissus they are past-masters, and we have much to learn from them.

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Legitimately proud of a glorious history and of a refined culture, they have little comprehension and less appreciation of anything outside their own country. What is foreign is unknown. There is no taking the unknown for the magnificent. Why trouble about what less polite, less cultivated nations have done or are doing? Is not Paris the centre of light for the universe?

This view of things has many advantages. It imposes on the world and affords a basis for prestige. It liberates its disciples from all trouble about foreign languages and foreign travel. Either would involve expense and unnecessary dissipation of interest. Is it not wiser to concentrate and save, when there is so much to learn, to admire, and to achieve at home?

The philosopher may consider these doctrines narrow. The hedonist cannot condemn them as unproductive of happiness. Is it best to be happy or to be self-critical? The Frenchman does not hesitate; Mon-

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taigne has said : " Mon art et mon métier, c'est vivre."

On this note it may be well to finish. There is no nation in the world that better knows how to enjoy life ; perhaps another way of saying that there is no nation more intelligent.

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